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The Honor of the Stars and Stripes

A PATRIOTIC PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

MARION SHORT

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HONOR OF THE STARS AND STRIPES

CAST OF CHARACTERS

- OTTO BERGENFELD.....*A middle-aged German of good family. Proprietor of a jewelry store*
- LENA BERGENFELD.....*Otto's daughter, born in America of an American mother. About eighteen years of age*
- GRETCHEN GRUPE.....*Lena's elder sister, married to a French-Alsatian*
- HOADLEY WALTERS.....*A young professor in Redfield Academy*
- FRANK OLCUTT.....*A true-blue American and a senior in Redfield Academy*
- STEPHEN BUSS.....*Nicknamed "Blunderbuss". A senior*
- MICHAEL O'SHEA.....*Janitor of Redfield Academy*
- VIVIAN MARLOWE.....*Student*
- ALBERTA MORRIS.....*Student*
- LAURA DEAN.....*Student*
- BETTY JOHNSON.....*Student*
- BERNICE OLCUTT.....*Student, and Frank's younger sister*
- MRS. SCROVINS.....*A "general helper", approaching middle-age and in reduced circumstances*
- MATILDA SCROVINS.....*Eleven-year-old daughter of Mrs. Scrovins*

SEP 26 1918

Wheat

DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

amp 29 Jan 34 OTTO BERGENFELD. A dignified German of the higher class. He speaks with only a slight accent and in low, well-modulated tones. Carries himself in military fashion bespeaking his early training as a soldier. He is a man of sincere convictions and with a deep love for family and country.

LENA BERGENFELD. A grave, sweet girl, speaking without a trace of the accent that still clings to her father. She is deep-hearted and loyal by nature, with a passionate dislike of deception and sham.

GRETCHEN GRUPE. A young woman of twenty-five or six. Her Madonna face shows signs of the intense suffering through which she has passed. She is of a deeply emotional nature. Dresses plainly in black.

HOADLEY WALTERS. A white-livered specimen of humanity with shifty eyes. He has but one wish in life—to amass a fortune. Patriotism means nothing to him, and he would sell his soul or his country for money.

FRANK OLCUTT. A slim-built, clean-cut young American, genial and likable, but with a sturdy manhood that makes him a natural leader among his fellows.

STEPHEN BUSS. "Blunderbuss". A big, good-humored young man cursed with an intense bodily awkwardness. He wants to please everybody and is untiring in his efforts to do so no matter how many mistakes he may make.

MICHAEL O'SHEA. A peppery Irishman to whom

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the pupils of Redfield Academy are a sort of perpetual affliction. His hair is fiery red, He always carries a pipe and at the close of every sentence returns it to his mouth, if only to hold it for a second. Speaks with only a slight brogue.

VIVIAN MARLOWE. A slim, fashionable young girl with a penchant for big hats and high-heeled shoes, and whose every sentence is charged with gushing enthusiasm.

ALBERTA MORRIS. A fat girl, slow of motion, and with a lazy drawl to correspond.

LAURA DEAN. A tall, handsome girl whose jealousy makes her a trifle vixenish at times.

BETTY JOHNSON. A studious pupil who wears glasses and is disposed to take life very seriously.

BERNICE OLCUTT. A fine, healthy, athletic American girl who scorns the sentimentality of lovers until she herself becomes a victim of the tender passion.

MRS. SCROVINS. Who is always recalling the days when her husband was living and she was "beholden to no one." She is slightly under middle age, old fashioned in dress and coiffure, and her eyebrows are raised in an expression of perpetual astonishment at the general mismanagement of the affairs of the universe. She is known as a "continuous talker".

MATILDA SCROVINS. A skinny child who wears her hair drawn back tightly from her forehead and hanging in two tight braids down her back. She chews gum habitually, and acts as a sort of interpreter of her mother's vague remarks. Her large eyes are generally rolled sideways and fixed upon the countenance of her maternal relative.

Honor Of The Stars And Stripes

ACT I

SCENE: *A class-room in Redfield Academy. Door C. opens into corridor. When door is open a hall-backing is disclosed. Door R. opens into girl's dressing-room. Window at L. Near window electric punch-buttons in wall. Desk and chair at L. A chair or two at R. Map of U. S. on wall, or other furnishings to suggest class-room atmosphere. A bunting decoration stretches across the wall at back.*

TIME: *Late afternoon.*

DISCOVERED: *Buss, standing on a short step-ladder at L. nailing up the final festoon of the bunting decoration. Olcutt sits at desk, making notes.*

BUSS. *(Sings as he works)* "I'm coming, yes coming, my head is bending low". *(Stops suddenly with an exclamation of pain)* Lord, I hit my finger! Somebody else ought to have done these decorations. I'm property man for the Red Cross tableaux, and that's enough of a job for one fellow to tackle. Wow! *(Nurses finger)*

OLCUTT. Never mind, Blunderbuss. What's a finger more or less? And that careless effect does you proud. What I'm wondering is how long it's going to take those girls to dress for rehearsal.

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They've spent two hours powdering their noses now.

(BERNICE and BETTY enter from P.)

BERNICE. (*Addresses OLCUTT*) For goodness sakes, brother, why don't you call the rehearsal?

OLCUTT. Waiting for you.

BERNICE. Well, we've been waiting for you.

BETTY. Yes, indeed! We've been dressed hours and hours, Mr. Olcutt.

(BUSS in descending from the ladder falls off it with a crash.)

BERNICE. Fall off the ladder! That's just like you, Blunderbuss.

BUSS. It's not my fault if I'm blundering, is it? I can't help it.

BERNICE. Oh, I suppose your feet are so heavy they do sort of weigh you down.

BUSS. What are you in the tableaux, Bernice? A beggar woman?

BERNICE. You know perfectly well I'm Eliza in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, crossing the ice.

BUSS. Well, you needn't freeze a fellow like that if you are crossing the ice.

OLCUTT. But I thought Eliza was a colored woman, Sis.

BERNICE. I'll look different to-night when I'm grease-painted and pursued by a blood-thirsty hound. This is only a rehearsal. (*As LAURA emerges from door R.*) Oh, Maud Muller, aren't you lovely?

LAURA (*Well pleased with herself*) Think so? Do you like me, Mr. Olcutt?

OLCUTT. (*Indifferently*) Fine!

BETTY. And how do I look as Maud Muller's Judge?

BUSS. (*Facetiously*) Judge not!

OLCUTT. (*Hesitatingly*) Well, er——

BETTY. I know I ought to have worn riding-breeches, because the poem says "the judge rode slowly down the lane, smoothing his horse's chestnut mane," but mother wouldn't let me.

LAURA. It seems a shame I can't have a real man for a judge. I know I can never act coquettish when I think of Betty's mustache.

OLCUTT. Well, we aren't all here yet! Where's Pocahontas?

BERNICE. Late, as usual.

LAURA. That girl never is on time, even to a game of basket-ball.

BERNICE. (*Opens door R. and calls off*) Birdie! Birdie! Hurry up!

(VIVIAN walks in from c.)

ALBERTA. (*Heard off R.*) I'm coming. (*Enters lazily from R.*) But I can't hurry—ever, and you just know I can't. (*Takes a chocolate from box she carries*) Just had an awful time trying to make my dress meet in the back. (*Eats another chocolate*)

BERNICE. I don't know why on earth we nicknamed you "Birdie". You never fly.

ALBERTA. Well, I can't help it if I'm slow. When you're fat it makes you slow.

LAURA. (*As ALBERTA helps herself to another piece of candy*) If you'd just stop eating so much candy——

ALBERTA. But I have to eat candy. My system demands it.

BUSS. And Birdie believes in system.

VIVIAN. Never mind, Birdie. I think a fat Pocahontas is ever so much more charming than a thin one.

LAURA. (*Sarcastically*) So much more apt to

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ready to be burned alive, I shall die of thrills, I Smith to save him.

OLCUTT. Allow me to congratulate you on your patriotism in your choice of costume, Miss Marlowe.

VIVIAN. I chose it because I'm just crazy to go abroad and nurse the poor French soldiers. I think if I could just bandage one of their darling wounded heads I should expire!

BUSS. She wouldn't expire, but the soldier she was nursing would.

LAURA. (*As MRS. SCROVINS and MATILDA appear in door c.*) Oh, Mrs. Scrovins, there you are! I've been waiting for you to fix my dress.

MRS. SCROVINS. (*Taking pins from front of her dress, and arranging LAURA'S costume as she speaks*) Yes, here I am at last, though goodness knows I'm surprised at it, for all this afternoon I've been chasing around like a hen with her head cut off not being able to accomplish miracles and be in more than one place at a time, though my dear departed husband used to say there wasn't anything an angel could do that I couldn't, and I suppose it would be an easy matter to them having wings, though dear knows I shouldn't know how to manage them at first trial, and especially being uncomfortable if they came through the shoulder-blades. Yes, I know you're backed up to me and wanting me to start in, Miss Laura, but the trouble began with my being half an hour late with my work this morning, which I shall always lay to the clock stopping an hour in the middle of the night without warning and then starting on again, which as you'll all agree is something no clock was ever known to do before, though as I said to Jane Allen this morning when she came out to turn on the hose you can't tell what will happen in these times from one day to another, and——

MATILDA. (*Interrupting wearily*) What Ma means is she overslept an hour this mornin' and it made her behindhand.

MRS. SCROVINS. Which is exactly what I was saying in plain words, all but the oversleeping which wasn't me but the clock, and never can be made up again for goodness knows I do all that's possible for a woman to do now, and anyway I've looped you up on one side, Miss Laura, but being just pinned it won't stay, and Miss Vivian's petticoat shows a little below her dress, and Pocahontas isn't more than half held together, and being as I was asked by the committee of arrangements to take charge of you young ladies, and glad to do it reasonable though when my husband was alive I was beholden to no one, and you'd better be sewed together all of you instead of pinned for though some say I'm over particular I've always thought there'd be nothing on earth so embarrassing as to have your clothes drop off before a large audience.

MATILDA. (*With increasing weariness*) What Ma means is that if you'll come on into the dressing-room she'll tack you up.

MRS. SCROVINS. Which were my identical words in plain English, Tildy, because the light is good in there and needle and thread handy, although my eyesight being remarkably keen for a woman of my age, which after all isn't the age some think it is——

MATILDA. (*Manages to interrupt as MRS. SCROVINS takes a deep breath*) I don't know what Ma means by that.

LAURA. (*Starts for door R.*) Come on, Bernice, and be tacked while Mrs. Scrovins is here.

BERNICE. Thanks, Laura, but I don't need tacking. The tackier Eliza looks the more realistic she is.

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ALBERTA. I don't want my beads and feathers coming loose.

VIVIAN. I'm going to practice my pose while you work, Mrs. Scrovins. I think being in a tableau is just the most blissfully ecstatic fun in the world. O, do come on!

MRS. SCROVINS. (*As LAURA, ALBERTA, BETTY, VIVIAN and MATILDA exit R.*) I'm coming as fast as I can come, though doubtless you don't realize it being carried away by excitement and youth, which comes but once in a lifetime, and then speeds away like a thunder cloud, which I should know being led to the altar myself when a mere child, and—(*Disappears through door R. still talking*)

WALTERS. (*Struts in rather stagily at c. from corridor L.*) Well, Olcutt, have you had the tableau inspection yet?

OLCUTT. No, Mr. Walters, but I think they'll all be on hand for it inside of five minutes.

WALTERS. (*Posing*) You can inspect me right now if you like. Any suggestions?

OLCUTT. (*Rather coldly*) None whatever.

WALTERS. It would surprise me if you were able to pick any flaws in my costume. As an authority on history I looked out for every detail myself.

BERNICE. We ought to feel honored that one of our professors is to take part in the tableaux. I should never have known you as Nathan Hale.

WALTERS. (*With a conceited smile*) One of our young ladies remarked that no Broadway professional could look the part better. I always had a slight leaning toward the dramatic. Well, I'll see how things are going in Assembly Hall. (*Starts toward door c.*) Most of the teachers will be on hand for rehearsal, I know. (*Exits c. into corridor and off R. in corridor*)—

BUSS. Say, Olcutt, you've always declared Wal-

ters was a double-faced trickster, and I've doubted it. But now I take off my hat to you. Anyone can see at a glance that he's miscast as Nathan Hale,—that he'd be the last man on earth to lay down his life for his country. Isn't that so?

BERNICE. But he certainly did look awfully swell.

OLCUTT. (*Quickly, to BERNICE*) But that's a mistake. Nathan Hale was a child of the people, a plain country chap, and Walters has togged him out like a millionaire.

BUSS. Why didn't you tell him so and take down his conceit?

OLCUTT. Because there's something about his shifty eyes that gets my goat. I hate him so I have to be polite to him just to prove to myself my personal feelings aren't making me unfair to him.

VIVIAN. (*Enters R.*) Well, as a general helper in time of need, Mrs. Scrovins takes the medal even if she does have the continuous-conversation habit. Do I impress you as a typical Red Cross nurse, Mr. Olcutt?

OLCUTT. The top part of you is all right, but how about the shoes?

VIVIAN. How about them? Well, they cost twelve-fifty, and I think they're too deliciously adorable for anything, don't you?

OLCUTT. For the ball-room, yes. But a typical Red Cross nurse wouldn't——

VIVIAN. (*Interrupts indignantly*) That's all you know about it, Frank Olcutt, and I beg to inform you that if I once got over to France, and the Red Cross found fault with my silk stockings and pumps, I'd resign then and there, and their old organization would just have to take the consequences.

BUSS. Sh! Don't let the Red Cross hear you, Vivian. The blow might stagger it.

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(MRS. SCROVINS, *who begins to talk before she is in sight, enters from door R. followed by MATILDA, ALBERTA, LAURA and BETTY.*)

MRS. SCROVINS. (*Removing pins from her mouth and putting them into a small cushion at her belt as she talks*) And now I'll go on into the Assembly Room and mend a hole in the drop-curtain, for goodness knows it spoils the effect to see what's going on before it is going on, as my friend Myrtle Green used to remark that married the policeman, whom I'll always remember about from losing a bran new pair of pants out of the closet by theft the day after her sister married a Member of Congress and wasn't particularly bright either when they were the only pair the poor creature had fit to wear, and——

MATILDA. Ma means the police had his pants stole, not Miss Green nor Congress.

(*Exit BUSS C. into corridor and off L. with ladder.*)

MRS. SCROVINS. Which was my identical remarks in plain English, and it's not proper of you, Tildy, to interrupt your mother the way you do, but such a day as it has been! No wonder with everybody expecting everything done at once, including the faculty, and my poor husband always treating me like a wax doll, and—what are you dawdling there keeping me waiting for, Tildy? (*Starts for door C. and exits with MATILDA into corridor and off R. still talking*) Though I suppose they're just putting in their time gossiping among themselves which is not befitting the married state, as I should know having been through such an experience myself as a mere child, and—(*Her voice dies away outside*)

BERNICE. We're all ready for inspection, Frank. Why don't you begin?

OLCUTT. Lena Bergenfeld isn't here.

BERNICE. Oh, I'd almost forgotten Lena!

LAURA. It's her own fault, isn't it, if she's late? Why should we wait for her?

OLCUTT. Why shouldn't we wait for her?

LAURA. (*With a sarcastic smile and much emphasis*) Well, we know how *we* feel about her taking part in these tableaux anyhow—don't we, Bernice?

BERNICE. I've been thinking that over, Laura. The Red Cross is a neutral organization, you know.

LAURA. Well, I don't care if it is! We've broken off diplomatic relations with Germany, and Lena oughtn't to be allowed in these tableaux at all. I think I'll give her a gentle hint to that effect when she comes in.

OLCUTT. What's that? What are you going to do?

LAURA. Why, I just thought—that is, Bernice and I together thought——

BERNICE. Truly, Frank, do you think Lena should be in these tableaux now when any minute war may be declared?

OLCUTT. Of course I do. Lena was born in America and of an American mother.

LAURA. Well, her father is German, and Lena lived four years in Germany after her mother died, and to me she seems German to the very backbone. We girls just can't be as friendly toward her as we are toward each other.

OLCUTT. That's no news to me. I've noticed for a month past how she's been snubbed and neglected and made to feel a stranger and an alien. Yes, I've watched you, and I've seen it. And so has she. She wouldn't have taken part in this show at all if I hadn't got Principal McCormack to put it up to her as a special favor. He represented to her that as we were the two pupils who

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stood highest in the Senior Class he wanted us in the same scene. That's why she overlooked your snubs and came back into the tableau. And since she was obliging enough to do it I just want to say one thing more. I'm running this affair, and if Lena Bergenfeld hears a single remark that makes her feel she isn't welcome here, everything's off for to-night—that's all, and there'll be no Red Cross benefit.

BERNICE. When he speaks like that, *everybody* has to give in.

LENA. *(Enters hastily at c. from L. in corridor)* Am I dreadfully late? Oh, I'm so sorry! I hope you'll forgive me.

BERNICE. *(Sotto voce to LAURA)* Here's to fall on her neck! *(Politely, as she faces the new-comer)* You aren't so very late, Lena.

LAURA. *(Sweetly)* Not so very.

BERNICE. And doubtless you have a good excuse!

VIVIAN. Of course you have.

BETTY. Certainly.

ALBERTA. We all know that.

LENA. You see, in order to match a hair-ribbon to a sample of dress, I had to visit every store in town.

LAURA. *(With exaggerated sweetness)* Oh, of course, if you were matching hair ribbons——

OLCUTT. She had a perfect right to do so, and as Blunderbuss hasn't completed his property-list anyhow, there's plenty of time.

LENA. *(Throws back long coat she is wearing)* I don't have to change my dress. I'm wearing my Priscilla costume under this long coat. *(Removes coat)*

BERNICE. You do look sweet, Lena.

LAURA. Lovely!

BETTY. Dear!

VIVIAN. Ravishing!

ALBERTA. (*With a sigh*) Thin!

LAURA. (*Aside to BERNICE*) Matching ribbons! A made-up excuse, of course.

(*Enter MATILDA C. from R. in corridor.*)

LENA. (*Catchnig sight of MATILDA*) Oh, Tildy, you're just the one I wanted to see!

MATILDA. You didn't get it, I know you didn't, so you needn't tell me!

LENA. But I *did* get it, Tildy.

MATILDA. You did? Honest Injun? (*With renewed doubt*) But you didn't get it to match! Ma says this dress is made out of one of Aunt Rhody's and it can't be matched this side of Kingdom Come.

LENA. But I did match it without going to Kingdom Come for the purpose, Tildy. To be sure, I started out early this afternoon and couldn't find what I wanted until I got to a little shop away the other side of the railroad track—but there they had some old, old ribbons that must have been as old as your Aunt Rhody's dress, and—here they are for your birthday.

MATILDA. (*Draws end of ribbon from package LENA hands her*) My crooky! Look at 'em! Bows for my hair! Two bows! I always wanted bows, but I thought I'd have to wait until I was grown up to get 'em. Now I can wear bows to the tableaux! Oh, thank you, Miss Bergenfeld! I'm just as happy as if I was an angel! Bows for my birthday! I want Ma to see 'em. Ma—Ma—— (*Runs off at C. and to R.*)

BERNICE. To make that forlorn kid so happy was worth being late for, Lena. Girls, we ought to have remembered Tildy's birthday too. It was nice of you to take all that trouble for her, Lena.

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LENA. Oh, it wasn't anything—a pleasure to me to please *her*, that's all. She's a friendly little thing, and I have so few friends here. Not that I'm complaining—(*Hastily, with a desire to change the subject*) You girls look so well—so very charming, and—(*To BERNICE*) so dramatic.

BERNICE. I think my hair hanging wild is dramatic, but it takes the bloodhound to complete me.

OLCUTT. (*To LENA*) You're wonderful as Priscilla.

LAURA. Isn't she? Very effective indeed, though rather German in type.

OLCUTT. (*Quickly*) Which makes it all the better. The Puritan and the German types are rather similar.

BUSS. (*Enters at c. from L. carrying various articles to be used in the tableau*) Well, I hope I've collected all the props this time that were missing at the last rehearsal, for I've levied on all the old junk in town to do it.

OLCUTT. Then everybody line up for the tableau inspection. (*All those in costume form in line*)

BERNICE. Where's your John Alden costume, Frank?

OLCUTT. I'll rehearse as I am because I have to drill the Boy Scouts soon as this is over. (*Calls names ceremoniously*) Maud Muller!

LAURA. (*Arranges her sun-hat consciously*) Present.

OLCUTT. (*Consults a small note-book taken from his pocket*) Properties not furnished last time: a cup and a rake.

BUSS. (*Passing articles named to LAURA*) Here you are!

LAURA. (*Protestingly*) But that's a china shaving-mug! On the program it says: "She filled for him her small tin cup."

BUSS. (*With a mind above such trivialities*) Oh, what's the diff, Laura? He can drink out of it first and shave out of it afterwards.

OLCUTT. (*Firmly, as he takes mug from LAURA and hands it back to BLUNDERBUSS*) You'll have to try again, Blunderbuss. (*Consults note-book again*) The Judge!

BETTY. Present!

OLCUTT. (*Looks at list*) Not provided last time—one mustache!

BUSS. Here it is with a sticker attached. (*Puts is against BETTY's upper lip where it remains*)

BETTY. (*Anxiously*) I hope I look dignified.

OLCUTT. Pocahontas! Stake called for.

ALBERTA. Present! (*Devours a chocolate-drop*)

BUSS. (*Hands over a long wooden stake to ALBERTA*) Say, I nearly bought a beefsteak to bring you until I happened to notice the way it was spelled.

VIVIAN. Oh, when John Smith is tied to that ready to be burned alive, I shall die of thrills, I know I shall!

OLCUTT. By the way, where is John Smith?

BUSS. Backed out. He says when Birdie fell on his neck everybody'd holler "squashed," and he can't stand it.

ALBERTA. (*Indignantly*) Well, if he doesn't show up you'll have to be John Smith yourself, Blunderbuss, for I've spent two dollars on beads and feathers just to save his life, and safe it I will!

BUSS. (*Faintly*) Help!

OLCUTT. Priscilla!

LENA. Spinning-wheel on stage. My yarn I have here. (*Indicates apron pocket*)

OLCUTT. Red Cross Nurse!

VIVIAN. Present!

BUSS. What the dickens have you got in your hand?

VIVIAN. A sanitary wash-cloth I knitted myself

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to remove war microbes from the faces of those dear hospital soldiers! I thought the idea was quite an inspiration!

OLCUTT. Eliza!

BERNICE. Present. Ice on the stage. Where's my bloodhound, Blunderbuss? Now don't tell me you've forgotten him again!

BUSS. He's outside, I'll get him. (*Exits c. and off L.*)

BERNICE. I told him to borrow Mr. Mathewson's Great Dane. He's the fiercest looking dog in town.

ALBERTA. I should think you'd be afraid of him unless you had something to feed him with. (*Eats another chocolate drop*)

BUSS. (*Enters, carrying a stuffed dog*) Here's your bloodhound.

BERNICE. (*Highly indignant*) That? But *that* is *stuffed*!

BUSS. He'd look too thin if I took the stuffing out.

BERNICE. (*Turns to OLCUTT*) Frank, I simply won't have him—he's absurd!

BUSS. He'll look real enough when the lights are on. Don't jump into me, Bernice, it makes me nervous. (*Retires to extreme L. and stands near punch-buttons in wall*)

BERNICE. You just act contrary on purpose. You could have got that Great Dane if you had tried.

BUSS. Professor Mc Cormack himself said you'd better not have him.

BERNICE. But who first suggested a stuffed dog instead of a real one, you or the Professor? Tell me that.

BUSS. (*Rather sheepishly*) I suppose I did, first.

BERNICE. I knew it. -

BUSS. (*Nervously punches button near his hand*)

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to relieve his feelings) Now look here, Bernice. That Great Dane is half wild and might think you'd make a good luncheon.

BERNICE. So, just because you thought it might be dangerous, you went and spoiled my pleasure!

OLCUTT. Now don't start quarreling again, you two.

BERNICE. (*Almost in tears*) I'm not quarreling, but ever since I was so high, (*Makes illustrative gesture*) and Blunderbuss lived across the street from us, he's thought it was up to him to take charge of me, as if I were an idiot or something. Once when Daddy had bought me high boots on purpose to wade through snowdrifts in, Blunderbuss came along and insisted on carrying me home. I suppose he can't help it of course if his brains ail went to his feet, but it's mighty hard on me.

BUSS. (*Nervously punches push-button in wall again*) Abraham Lincoln had big feet, too. He wore the same sized boots I do.

BERNICE. But he had brains to correspond.

BUSS. I suppose I am an awful duffer, but I don't make half the mistakes I used to.

(*Enter MICHAEL excitedly at c. from L. He carries a fire extinguisher.*)

MICHAEL. Out of the way, everybody! Give me a clear space! Where's the fire?

OMNES. What fire? "Is there a fire?" "Gracious, a fire!" etc.

WALTERS. (*Entering at c.*) What's the excitement?

OLCUTT. What makes you think there's a fire, Michael? There isn't a sign of one here.

MICHAEL. Then what's that fire-alarm over there been ringin' down-stairs for as if Satan himself was punchin' the button?

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BUSS. (*Gives a wild start and backs away from buttons consciously*) Oh, I guess I—I wasn't noticing—and did it by accident!

BERNICE. Blunderbuss! Of course! And he talks about Abraham Lincoln!

MICHAEL. What? No fire at all? And me runnin' up two flights of stairs wid me game leg tryin' to doub'e under me every step? (*Walks up to BLUNDERBUSS*) I've a good mind to extinguish you, young man, fire or no fire.

BUSS. (*Ruefully*) Don't. I'm extinguished enough already.

MICHAEL. Well, I'll overlook it this time, but never again.

BUSS. (*Nods*) Nuff said.

(*Exit MICHAEL C. and off L. as BERNICE begins to talk.*)

BERNICE. Come on, girls, into the Assembly Room, and see what the teachers think of us. Come on, everybody.

(*OMNES exit carrying props and chattering ad lib.*)

WALTERS *detains LENA who is the last to approach door C.*)

WALTERS. Wait a minute, Miss Bergenfeld. I've a bone to pick with you.

LENA. (*Looking toward door C. as if desirous of making her escape*) Why so, Mr. Walters?

WALTERS. Because you didn't give me even a glimpse of you last night when I called to see your father.

LENA. I do not always wait to see my father's company, and besides—I wanted to study.

WALTERS. But I had told you I hoped to see you while there.

(LENA is silent.)

WALTERS. (*Sentimentally, after a pause*) Why do you dislike me so?

LENA. (*With sudden resolution, faces him*) Nathan Hale regretted that he had only one life to give for his country. How could you choose to take that part in the tableaux?

WALTERS. (*Wincing*) Is that the thanks I get from you for working with your father for the interests of Germany? It strikes me we're all in the same boat—you, your respected father and myself.

LENA. (*Earnestly*) But there's a difference. My father and I are working for Germany because we are of German blood and think she is in the right, but you work for her because you're paid for it in gold. Oh, I don't care how father looks at it, I can't forget you're doing it for pay.

WALTERS. Very well, I'll talk the matter over with your father, and——

LENA. (*Showing fear*) Oh, no! you mustn't tell father what I've said. He wouldn't like it, I know. (*To OLCUTT, relievedly, as he enters at c. from R.*) Oh, Mr. Olcutt, have I kept you waiting?

OLCUTT. (*Comes down*) Not at all. The bell for rehearsal hasn't rung yet, and anyhow our tableau comes last.

WALTERS. (*Irritably*) What are they waiting for? I'm tired of this senseless hanging around. (*Exits c. and off R. in corridor*)

OLCUTT. (*With boyish delight*) Is it possible I'm here alone with you, Lena, without a mob at my elbow? I never saw such a place as a Co-ed Academy anyhow. There's about as much chance for really getting acquainted with a girl as if she lived in Greenland.

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LENA. (*Her manner all graciousnes in sharp contrast to her treatment of WALTERS*) Was there anything special you wanted to say to me?

OLCUTT. (*Confused*) Wh—why—(*Has a sudden inspiration*) Oh, yes! I wanted to give you back your pen-knife. You let it fall as you passed my desk this morning.

LENA. (*Takes pen-knife and slips it in a pocket of her apron*) Thank you, I was wondering what had become of it.

OLCUTT. Anyhow—I wanted a private chat with you.

LENA. (*Taking alarm*) About what? It—it has nothing to do with my father, has it?

OLCUTT. Your father? No! Why, Lena, please don't think I'm prejudiced against him even if he is German born. Why, I agree with Dad that if war is declared the greater part of the population will stand by the land of their adoption. The Germans were splendid soldiers in our Civil War, and if we break with Germany to the fighting point, I know Mr. Bergenfeld will prove himself a true and loyal American.

LENA. I think you have the spirit of fair play more than some of the others, Mr. Olcott.

OLCUTT. You mustn't let the girls bother you by their remarks on that subject, Lena. They're emotional, and snobbish, and cliqueish without realizing it. But then that's partly your own fault, you know.

LENA. My own fault? How?

OLCUTT. You haven't given any of us a chance to really know you. You ought to chum in with us more. And that's what I wanted to speak about especially. I want to ask for your company to the Senior dance and reception next week.

LENA. Thank you, but I can't go—really, Mr. Olcott, I can't.

OLCUTT. I knew you'd say that. But why, Lena? Don't you—like me?

LENA. Of course, Mr. Olcott! It hasn't a thing to do with you, personally. But I've never been around with the other girls, as you know, not even to their little parties, and they'll all expect you to ask some one among them who is pretty and popular—Laura, for instance.

OLCUTT. Who cares what the class expects? There's only one girl in the world I'll enjoy taking, and I've dreamed of taking her ever since she first entered Redfield Academy a year ago. Lena, you'll not turn me down and make the whole reception a ghastly farce to me—now will you?

LENA. I—I'm not sure my father would consent.

OLCUTT. Let me ask him myself. My father will be at that reception and I want you and him to become acquainted. He's wonderful, Lena.

LENA. (*Rather forcing her words*) Yes, I understand he has profited greatly by this war between Germany and England, and of course if America joined in the war—his factories would be kept still busier.

OLCUTT. There, now, Lena, I've tried to be fair with you and your father, and you must be the same with me. The girls have made you bitter, I know, but you mustn't let that blind you to the truth. I honestly believe that if it came to a test there isn't an American manufacturer in this United States but would sacrifice every penny of profits the war might bring him to save the life of just one boy that starts out to fight under the old flag. If our country goes to war, it will be because we put something above human life, that's true, but that something isn't profit and money, it's right and justice. (LENA *has moved over to the window at L. and stands looking out*) Why, just to show you

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how little my Dad thinks of the money part of it—are you listening, Lena?

LENA. Yes, of course.

OLCUTT. You were looking out of the window. I thought you didn't seem interested.

LENA. Some gathering clouds caught my eye for just a moment, but I'm listening. I am interested. *(She comes back and drops down in desk chair. He stands near her)*

OLCUTT. Well, then, Dad's just completed a wonderful invention, a new under-sea torpedo to help wipe out the submarines. If war is declared, he intends to put it at the disposal of Uncle Sam without one cent of pay for it! He says he's too old to fight, but that will be his way of doing his bit. That's how much the patriotic sons of America think of money when it comes to a showdown. Good Lord, here I am haranguing you like a soap-box orator, Lena. Get me started on patriotism, and I never know where to stop. Let's get back to that Senior Reception. You will go with me, Lena, won't you?

LENA. I—I'll speak to father about it and let you know. I'd really like your company ever so much.

OLCUTT. Thank you for saying that—just that one sentence was worth waiting a year for in itself. *(Sound of wild cheering and babble heard off R.)* What's the racket, I wonder?

BUSS. *(Heard off)* Olcutt! Olcutt! Where are you? *(Enters at c. from R.)* Say, do you suppose they'll give young fellows like us a chance to fight?

OLCUTT. To fight? What are you talking about? The rehearsal——

BUSS. Rehearsal nothing! Everybody's forgotten there is such a thing. The U. S. is at war with

Germany. Prof. McCormack has just come from town with the news.

OLCUTT. Hurrah for Uncle Sam!

LENA. (*Almost inaudibly*) At—war—with Germany!

OLCUTT. (*Still facing BUSS, having forgotten LENA for the time being*) Dad said it would come to that, but I didn't think it would be so soon! Where is Professor McCormack.

BERNICE. (*Enters at c. followed by VIVIAN, LAURA, ALBERTA and BETTY*) Frank! Just think—we're actually at war! President Wilson declares a state of war exists! They're forming an impromptu parade in front of the Post Office down town and everybody's wild!

OLCUTT. If there's a parade, I'll bet Dad's marching at the head of it.

BERNICE. Oh, do you suppose he is?

BETTY. I hope they'll march up Academy Avenue!

VIVIAN. So do I! I want to wave to them. I was never so ecstatically exhilarated in my life!

OLCUTT. Where is Professor McCormack?

BERNICE. Still talking to the students. Hurry up if you don't want to miss it!

OLCUTT. Come on, everybody! (*Exits at c. and off R. followed by BERNICE, BETTY, LAURA, ALBERTA and BUSS. LENA remains. Covers her face with her hands*)

BERGENFELD. (*Enters quietly at c. from R.*) Lena!

LENA. (*Gives slight, startled scream, then faces her father*) Father—you've heard?

BERGENFELD. (*Makes careful attempt always to speak good English, but his German accent is evident*) Yes, and it is what I have expected already yet for two weeks past. Now it is for us

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to use the brain and play our part. It is fortunate that I find you alone.

LENA. Fortunate? Why? They all know we are Germans.

BERGENFELD. But not that we have worked for her in the past, nor that we shall work for her now with ten times the more energy. Now it will be work indeed!

LENA. But, father, if anyone should suspect—

BERGENFELD. Do not fear, my Lena. I am here to make it that they shall not. You shall watch me with the wide open eyes. (*Some one begins to play "Columbia" on piano off R. Sound of cheering heard off R.*)

LENA. Listen! They are coming back!

BERNICE. (*Heard off R.*) The U. S. A. forever! (*Rushes in followed by VIVIAN, BETTY, LAURA, ALBERTA, MRS. SCROVINS, MATILDA, BUSS and OLCUTT. Everybody has flag, pennant, or bright sweater in hand*) Three cheers for Professor McCormack—the good old patriot, and you can wave your sweater if you haven't got anything better. (*OMNES, except LENA*) Hurrah. Hurrah! Hurrah!

VIVIAN. (*Referring to piano-music off R.*) Oh, there's something about that patriotic music that makes me feel as if I could go out on the battlefield and capture that old Kaiser myself!

BERNICE. I'm glad we don't have to pretend to be friends with him any more. I just hate those old Hohenzollerns—oh, Mr. Bergenfeld—I didn't notice—(*Stops, fearing she may have wounded his feelings*)

BERGENFELD. (*Pleasantly, but with a ceremonious bow*) Good evening, Miss O'cutt and the others.

BERNICE. Of course I didn't mean to be personal—just—just military, that's all. I didn't notice that you—that is—I didn't think——

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BERGENFELD. (*With perfect courtesy*) It is a time of much excitement and enthusiasm, now the Declaration of War for which we have been waiting has come!

ALBERTA. I was so worked up I swallowed two whole chocolate drops at once!

BERGENFELD. In one short five minutes Germany the friend has become Germany the hated enemy.

OLCUTT. Our President kept us from war as long as he could, Mr. Bergenfeld.

BERGENFELD. Yes, yes, I know, and now in a time like this it is for us of the Fatherland to choose which shall be our country, Germany or the United States.

OLCUTT. It must be pretty hard.

BERGENFELD. Hard, yes. Many good friends I have made the four years when I live with my Lena there in Berlin, besides the friends of my youth I met again there on that visit. My Gretchen, she is married to a German subject and lives in Alsace. But I have hesitated not one short minute in my decision since the break has come. Mr. Olcutt, you are the Captain of the Redfield Academy Cadets, is it not so?

BERGENFELD. Yes, yes, I know, and now in a few months we boys have been giving considerable attention to military training.

BERGENFELD. The Cadets have their own company flag, yes?

OLCUTT. No, but you bet we will have one now as soon as we can raise the money.

(*Music ceases.*)

BERGENFELD. Then the money must be provided.
(*Sits at desk and as the others talk produces a check book and writes a check*)

BERNICE. We girls will help out with a raffle.

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LAURA. Or a dance.

VIVIAN. Or an endless-chain letter.

BETTY. Lectures!

ALBERTA. A fudge party. (*Devours a chocolate-drop*)

BERGENFELD. (*Rises from desk*) It is my pleasure to make it all unnecessary. (*Presents OLCUTT a check*) There is my check. On this, the day of the declaration of war, Otto Bergenfeld presents a flag to the Redfield Cadets who will soon be fighting for America.

OLCUTT. Bully for you, Mr. Bergenfeld. You mean by that——?

BERGENFELD. I mean my daughter and I are good Americans.

BUSS. (*Enthusiastically*) I say, old fellow—that is—I didn't mean you're *old* of course—just that you *look* old——

BERNICE. (*Reproachfully*) Blunderbuss!

BUSS. What I meant was that we boys are mighty grateful—that you and Lena are the real thing and——

BERNICE. (*To BUSS*) That's more like it. (*Goes to LENA, cordially*) Lena, we girls are just as ashamed of ourselves as we can be.

BETTY. We've always been so afraid you were a real German at heart.

BERNICE. And sympathized with crushing Belgium and the blowing up of the Lusitania and all that!

(LENA tries to speak, then turns away.)

LAURA. (*In honied, yet half suspicious tones*) But now of course we know you didn't.

BERGENFELD. Lena is overcome with your kindness. Smile, my daughter. It is always my wish you be good friends with your schoolmates.

LENA. (*Forcing a smile*) Yes, father—I know.
(*To BERNICE*) I thank you. You are very kind.

(*Buss exits c. unobserved.*)

OLCUTT. No, not kind, only just. And I'd like to ask you right now, Mr. Bergenfeld, if I may have your daughter's company to the Senior Reception.

BERGENFELD. Until Lena is older, I prefer her to give her mind entirely to her studies, but I make now the exception, because I admire your spirit and that of your patriotic father. She shall be permitted to accept of your invitation.

OLCUTT. Thank you, Mr. Bergenfeld.

(*Enter Buss, carrying a worn flag.*)

Buss. Swiped this flag from the Assembly Room. Had to think up something to let off my superfluous patriotism or bust. What's the matter with everybody pledging allegiance to Old Glory?—We all know the pledge from the Boy Scouts' Manual.

BERNICE. I declare, Blunderbuss, occasionally you *do* have an idea! All face the flag! (*OMNES do so except LENA who slips away toward L.*) Now, one—two—three—pledge!

OMNES. "I pledge allegiance to the flag, and to the Republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

VIVIAN. A girl who wouldn't just do everything for the flag, I'd despise.

LAURA. Why weren't you with us, Lena?

OLCUTT. Why, she was, wasn't she?

LENA. (*Who has been nervously handling a pen-knife*) No—I—I cut my finger just now—an accident—so I—I felt faint and dropped out. (*Shows hand, and finger stained with blood*)

(There is a sympathetic murmur from onlookers.)

OLCUTT. I'm sorry. Can't I get you something?

BERGENFELD. No, in a moment it will pass. She has been too sensitive always from a child.

BERNICE. Well, it's good it's nothing serious. *(Looks down from window at L.)* There are the Boy Scouts forming on the campus! And Professor Mc Cormack is getting ready to make them a speech. He's forgotten everything but the war.

BETTY. Let's all go down!

VIVIAN. Oh, isn't it just the most thrillingly breathless thing just to be alive when there's a war going on!

BLUNDERBUSS. You bet it is! Forward! March! *(Marches out ahead of OMNES bearing flag. They exit at C. and off L. BERGENFELD, LENA and OLCUTT remain)*

OLCUTT. Wouldn't you like to come down too, to hear what Professor Mc Cormack says to the boys—you and Lena, Mr. Bergenfeld?

BERGENFELD. With pleasure, but my daughter she is still not quite herself. But from this window we can hear and see.

OLCUTT. That's so—you can. I certainly hope you'll soon feel all right again, Lena.

LENA. Thank you—it's really nothing to bother about. *(Goes toward window)*

OLCUTT. Those Scouts are a great bunch of boys—worth watching! *(Exits C. and off L.)*

BERGENFELD. He is stupid—a fool—that young man—as were all of them—or they could see you cut yourself as an excuse to keep from repeating the pledge. Why did you not go forward with the others?

LENA. I—I couldn't, father.

BERGENFELD. And why not?

LENA. It didn't seem right to pretend to be their friend—to pretend loyalty to the flag.

BERGENFELD. You must put away such weak scruples, or it is to bring suspicion on us and tie our hands. Listen, my daughter. I lived my young years in Germany. It is more great than any country on earth. There is no poverty there. There is exact justice. There is no waste, no extravagance—such sins are not allowed. When Germany rules the world, the world will be happy. It is for the good of the world we are looking.

LENA. I want to believe it, father—and I do believe it, of course. Yet sometimes when I read in the papers of their frightfulness, their cruelty to the old—both men and women—and that they've even mutilated little children——

BERGENFELD. (*Passionately*) Lies, all lies! Written by the American people to make an excuse for the lust of gold which has drawn them into this war.

LENA. Then why must we pretend to believe as they do?

BERGENFELD. It is not pleasant, maybe, but I am a philosopher. It is sometimes that we who are called to work the great problems of the world are required to do a little wrong that a great right may follow. This little wrong is that we deceive the good, stupid Americans. The great right is that in the end Germany shall rule the world. (*Sound of cheering heard from off R. L.*) So then it is well you are friends with this young Olcott even more than the others.

LENA. Why so?

BERGENFELD. Because the secret of that new torpedo on which his father is working must somehow be found out.

LENA. (*Amazed*) But who told you of the invention? I thought no one knew.

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BERGENFELD. We know *all* that happens. They have given us Germans credit for a few things, maybe, these Americans—preparedness, a great fighting machine, efficiency—but not for our spy system—the greatest the world has ever known. When the new flag comes to Olcott for the Cadets—it is Lena Bergenfeld that shall ask from all again the pledge of loyalty.

LENA. Father, that is one thing you must not require of me. Why, if I joined in a solemn pledge like that, I—I'd have to live up to it. I couldn't be false to my sacred word!

BERGENFELD. What? After all I have explain to you—you little soft-heart? Then, since a pledge means so much to you—there is one you shall take—here—now—the pledge of allegiance to the Fatherland. As you speak the pledge, think of the time when these streets shall respond to the music of Deutschland Uber Alles! Are you ready for the pledge?

LENA. (*In a low, frightened tone*) Yes, I am ready.

BERGENFELD. Then say after me: "I do solemnly pledge my loyalty to the flag of my father—"

LENA. "I do solemnly pledge my loyalty to the flag of my father——"

BERGENFELD. "And if ever I am *false* to that pledge——"

LENA. "And if ever I am false to that pledge——"

BERGENFELD. "I solemnly promise to destroy myself with my own hand."

LENA. Oh, father, that sounds so harsh, so terrible!

BERGENFELD. Say it!

LENA. "I do solemnly promise to destroy myself with my own hand."

BERGENFELD. And remember that with you a pledge is binding. And now I will leave you. That's

right—stand close by the window where you will be seen. Come home when you please. (*Exits c. and off L.*)

(*A chorus of young voices rises from beneath window, singing The Star Spangled Banner.*)

LENA. (*As she listens*) That music! I'm German! I've promised to be true to the flag of my father! I'm German—oh, why does that music thrill me so?

Curtain.

ACT II

TIME: June of the same year. (1917)

SCENE: Interior of rough shack in the woods. Door c. with windows either side of it, reveals background of woods and summer scenery. Red Cross banner over door. There is a door at L. leading into kitchen. Door at R. leads to sleeping-quarters. The furniture of the camp should suggest the temporary abiding place of several girls, each with a different idea of decoration and what is necessary to "roughing it". There is a lounge covered with gaily figured cretonne. At L. near wall a flat desk with drawer. Hanging above it is a large tilted looking-glass. At R. is a small table covered with white oil-cloth containing surgical dressings. College flags, pennants, wild-flowers etc., used bountifully. A coil of clothes-line hangs by door c. A small bench near door contains pail of water with dipper. Other furnishings ad lib. Chairs include one rocker.

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DISCOVERED: BETTY, ALBERTA, LAURA and VIVIAN
*at their various tasks. The room is bright with
sunlight.*

(Enter TILDA from L. carrying two glasses of jelly.
She is followed by MRS. SCROVINS.)

MRS. SCROVINS. Don't drop them glasses, Tildy!

OMNES. (*Desisting momentarily from work*)
Jelly!

MRS. SCROVINS. I just had Tildy bring 'em in
as a sample, (TILDY exhibits jellies to the different
girls) and there's eighteen more glasses in the
kitchen just like 'em or better, not being one of those
people who always put the best jars of fruit to the
front, or the best peaches in the top of the basket,
though a practice sometimes indulged in even by
the best of grocers, like the one on our street who
married money which should have cured him of
such practices, though she being cross-eyed and
jilted by a tailor maybe wasn't such a catch as ap-
pears at first sight, and——

MATILDA. Ma means—how do you like her jell?

MRS. SCROVINS. Of course—that's exactly what
I asked them, and—dear me, Tildy, you've fallen
into an awful habit of repeating every word I say,
though maybe I should take it as a compliment, for
as my poor dear departed husband used to say—
'imitation is the sincerest flattery, which I never
was any hand for preferring plain truth, and not
being a canner by nature, but with this war and
Mr. Hoover filling up the papers, it's up to all to
do their duty, and however humble one may feel,
eighteen glasses of jelly in one forenoon is a drop
in the bucket if I do say it as shouldn't and though
I'm no hand to talk about myself——

MATILDA. Ma means she's pretending she ain't
done much, but she has.

BETTY. Why, certainly, Mrs. Scrovins, the jelly is fine and you've done wonders!

LAURA. We've all done wonders.

VIVIAN. Oh, if the war only knew the sacrifices we were all making for it, it certainly ought to be grateful! Here we are giving up our perfectly good mornings to canning fruit, and raising pigs, and knitting, and Red Cross supplies.—

BETTY. Just think! This camp has sent in forty surgical-dressings this week, and only thirty-three were returned as imperfect!

VIVIAN. The seven that were accepted were all Lena's.

LAURA. Oh, of course, Lena, does *everything* perfectly; but for all that I don't believe hers were a bit better than anyone else's.

VIVIAN. Well, I've got knitter's cramp from doing hospital-stockings for those poor dear darling Frenchmen, and this last pair doesn't match and I suppose they'll just have to find some soldier who doesn't match either, for goodness knows I'd get so nervous ripping them all out again I just couldn't stand it.

ALBERTA. What hits me hardest is doing without sweets five days a week just because the world is getting short of sugar. I haven't had a bit of candy since I left home and my stomach feels exactly like a vacuum cleaner.

MATILDA. Mine too, so I licked up some of the jelly Ma spilled over on the table.

ALBERTA. (*Yearningly*) Did you?

MRS. SCROVINS. Dear me, Tildy, to think of your telling it before these young ladies! though to be sure in one way it's a compliment, showing my efforts to jell are appreciated, which is always a pleasure there being something in life besides filthy lucre, as my dear husband used to say when enjoying a comfortable smoke, though dear knows there

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the resemblance ends, I never having tasted a cigar in my life, and being born without a desire for the weed, though some say it's now countenanced in New York society, and being assisted in my jelling by Miss Bergenfeld anyway——

LENA. (*Heard off L.*) Oh, Mrs. Scrovins—I'm afraid these berries want to be taken off!

MATILDA. Come on, Ma, she's hollerin' to you.

MRS. SCROVINS. Of course, and I heard her, having left her to watch things as her own proposition and, Tildy, I'd thank you not to be forever pulling at my dress, being naturally one of the sweetest girls I've ever known and with a simply angelic——

LENA. (*From off L. again*) Mrs. Scrovins, you'd better hurry!

MRS. SCROVINS. I'm coming, dear! (MRS. SCROVINS *exits hastily L.*)

MATILDA. Ma means Miss Bergenfeld's the sweetest young girl with the simply angelic—not me! And I hope she spills some more jell when she takes it off! (*Skips off at L.*)

(*Enter BERNICE, door c.*)

OMNES. “Oh, here's Bernice!” “Goody, goody!” “Any letters for me?” (*etc., ad lib*)

BERNICE. Something for all of you, and I just expect a vote of thanks for walking down to the rural delivery.

LAURA. I can't see that thanks are especially required. We excused you from surgical-dressings and have just been toiling our fingers off ever since you left.

BERNICE. If anybody offers you a thousand dollars for your disposition, Laura, you'd better take it and buy a different one. Here, everybody take their letters! Birdie, yours is a package. I bet it's chocolate bars! You ought to put them on sale and donate the proceeds to the cause.

ALBERTA. (*Falteringly*) Oh, but when mother sent them I don't think it would be—kind to her, and besides—she doesn't want my system to suffer.

BERNICE. Three letters for you, Viv, all in masculine hand-writing, or soon-to-be-masculine.

LAURA. From some cub about fourteen, doubtless. Vivian, how do you have the patience?

VIVIAN. Oh, but I think in war times anyone that's ever going to be old enough to be a soldier is just too delectable for anything!

LENA. (*Appears in door L.*) Anything for me?

BERNICE. Lena, you're a dream in that kitchen apron and your sleeves rolled up!

LENA. Oh, I'd forgotten my sleeves! (*Pulls them down*) I've been trying to help out Mrs. Scrovins with her jelly.

MATILDA. (*From L. bounces past LENA into the middle of the floor*) Somethin' else—somethin' else—somethin' else! I peeked in the oven! Lena made it and Ma says we're goin' to have 'em for supper!

LENA. Oh, Tildy, you little scamp—when I'd planned that for a surprise! But anyway—(*Addresses girls*) You don't know what it is.

VIVIAN. Hot biscuits! I just dote on them!

LENA. Better than that.

BETTY. Flapjacks! My mouth is watering!

MATILDA. Better'n flapjacks!

LENA. Well, more of a novelty.

ALBERTA. Don't tell me it's anything to do with berries or I'll shriek with delight!

LENA. Well, you've partly guessed it.

BERNICE. (*Sniffing*) I know. I can smell the juice sizzling. It's a raspberry pie.

MATILDA. No, 'tain't. It's two raspberry pies; and Lena and I picked 'em ourselves. I picked a handful and she picked two quarts.

LENA. And Mr. Doyle, the milkman, is going

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to donate a pint of cream and says he only asks one little piece for pay.

BERNICE. Girls, did you ever see anything like it. She's even enthralled the milkman!

ALBERTA. So sweet of you, Lena, to surprise us! Do you suppose there'll be enough for two helpings apiece?

BETTY. I'm sure I don't know what we'd all do without Lena.

VIVIAN. Neither do I. Her pies are simply heavenly dreams!

LENA. You're just spoiling me with flattery, girls, but please keep on. You don't know what it means to me to feel you've really taken me in—made me one of yourselves.

LAURA. Why, you speak as if it were a new experience, being made to feel at home with girls!

LENA. It is new—rather. There was always a governess before Mother died—never a chance to mix with other children. And then after she went we stayed in Germany for four long years. Sister liked it—she married over there—but I felt myself a sort of stranger. Sometimes I just fairly cried with longing to find myself in a good American school, with American boys and girls around me—and then, when we did come back and I entered the Senior Class at the Redfield Academy—why, why, just at first—(*Hesitates*)

BERNICE. You might as well say it, Lena—we acted like little fiends toward you—all of us, I suppose because we didn't like your German name. Brother Frank was the only one that seemed to have a particle of sense, and, speaking of Frank—here's a postal from him. Listen, everybody! (*Reads postal*) "Awfully busy at factory this week, but will try and make a trip out to see you in my car this afternoon. (*Significantly*) Give my regards to the girls——"

LAURA. Mercy, I haven't had a minute to crimp my hair!

BERNICE. (*Continuing*) "—especially Lena."

LAURA. But after all it doesn't matter whether one crimps one's hair out here or not.

BETTY. Frank Olcutt has had eyes for only one of us ever since the night of the Senior Reception.

LAURA. To which he almost invited me, then forgot all about it.

BETTY. Look out that Mr. Walters doesn't get fascinated by her, too, Laura. He does a mighty lot of looking at her when you aren't noticing.

LENA. Girls, please don't! You mean it all in fun I know, but—I'm not used to such joking. It makes me feel uncomfortable. Frank Olcutt is just a friend of mine, the same as he's a friend to all of us. He comes over to camp because Bernice is here, and——

VIVIAN. And because he especially likes berry-pies, I suppose.

LENA. And as for Mr. Walters, that's even more ridiculous.

LAURA. (*Drawling*) I wonder!

LENA. Yes, and if you care to know more about it, Mr. Walters and I don't even get along well together:—I—I actually dislike him. (*In lighter tone, and as if ashamed of her emotion*) Bernice, if that letter's for me, why don't you hand it over?

BERNICE. Here you are. (*Delivers letter*) Elderly masculine handwriting—probably from a gray-haired man with a slight German accent. (*Pats herself on the head*) I congratulate you, Miss Sherlock Holmes! That's all, girls, except this newspaper for yours truly.

MATILDA. (*As everybody settles down to reading letters*) I'm goin' to tell Ma nobody wrote her nothin'. (*Skips off L.*)

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BERNICE. (*As she turns page of newspaper*) Girls! What do you think? Here's an article about Dad's under-sea torpedo in the Times, with his picture! (OMNES, *except* LENA, *with exclamations of interest gather about BERNICE to look at picture*) Isn't that stupendous?

ALBERTA. Wonderful! It almost takes away my appetite. (*Nibbles piece of chocolate-bar*)

VIVIAN. If any one of my family had invented anything to win this war, I should simply expire with delight!

BERNICE. Well, of course no *one* invention is going to win the war, but all the experts seem to think Daddy's invention is going to help a lot. No wonder Frank thought it more worth while to work with him in the factory this summer than to go into camp with the other boys! Now, you blessed old dear, I'm going to tear your picture out and fasten it up on the wall for a decoration!

BETTY. Do, Bernice! It ought to inspire us in our Red Cross work.

LAURA. (*To LENA as BERNICE pins picture to wall*) Any bad news in your letter, Lena?

MATILDA. (*Runs past outside door from L. to R.*) Scat! Scat! You're after our little chicks!

LENA. No, it's from my father.

LAURA. I thought you looked rather pensive.

LENA. I didn't mean to do so. Father's coming to pay the camp a little visit this afternoon.

BERNICE. Glorious! How can you take it so quietly? If I got word like that from my Dad, I'd turn handsprings and somersaults all over the place.

VIVIAN. I suppose the calmness with which Lena takes things is just her way, but she misses a lot of thrills, and oh, I just love thrills! (*A sound of breaking glass and the fall of a heavy body heard outside*) Mercy, what's that?

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LAURA. A large-sized thrill from the sound of it.

BUSS. (*Heard outside*) Great Scott—dropped it!

BERNICE. Why, that's Blunderbuss! We might have known it. What's the matter, I wonder? (*OMNES rise and move toward door*)

(*BLUNDERBUSS, in cadet uniform, his hat mashed and over one eye, enters at c. He carries a brown paper package the contents of which are dripping through.*)

BUSS. (*Holds up package*) Squashed and ruined! Just as I got to the door!

OMNES. What was it?

BUSS. Two quarts of ice cream, some root beer and—(*To BERNICE*) that extra big bottle of ink you wanted.

BERNICE. All in one bundle of course, I suppose! (*Looks in package and gives exclamation of disgust*) Such a sight! Look, girls! (*Several girls look*) Ice-cream with ground-glass and black-ink sauce!

MATILDA. (*Bounces in at c.*) I saw him come a flopper! His feet flew away up!

BERNICE. (*Puts package into her hands*) Tildy, put this into a pig-trough, after you've scraped out the glass.

MATILDA. The pigs'll think it's Fourth of July! (*Exits with package at c.*)

BERNICE. So endeth the first ice-cream we've had in camp.

ALBERTA. I knew when I stepped on my looking-glass this morning something dreadful was going to happen. (*To BUSS, wistfully*) Was it chocolate?

LAURA. (*To BUSS*) How on earth did you come to lose your balance?

BUSS. Why, I don't know, unless it was that when I got in sight of the house I saw Tildy and

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thought for a minute it was—that is—she was—that she looked like—that she sort of bounced along like——

BERNICE. Don't look at *me*, please—I *never* bounce.

BUSS. Anyhow I thought it was you. Hang it all! I wonder if I'll ever stop being awkward and falling over my feet!

BERNICE. (*Kindly*) I'm sure you will, Buss. After you get to be an angel. They navigate with their wings, you know.

(OMNES *giggle at this to BUSS' great discomfiture*)

LENA. Girls, we haven't any of us thanked Mr. Buss yet for trying to give us a treat, and I'm sure it was lovely of him. (OMNES *remember and murmur words of thanks ad lib*)

BUSS. Oh, I just thought that it might taste good for a change—(*To LENA, who is putting on a shade-hat*) What you getting on your hat for? Don't you want to sit here and chin a while with a fellow that's down on his luck?

LENA. I'd like to very much, but I'm expecting my father and thought if I walked down the road I might meet him. But Bernice and the other girls will be glad to have you stay, I know. (*Exits c. and off L.*)

(VIVIAN *saunters to door and looks off R.*)

BERNICE. Oh, of course, Blunderbuss, we've no objection to your staying if you don't fall down and break the floor. (Buss *seats himself ruefully*)

VIVIAN. There's Mr. Walters coming. In ordinary clothes as history professor I never thought he was much, but in uniform he's just too immense for anything.

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LAURA. (*Excitedly*) Where's my powder-book? I know my nose shines like the face of the righteous. (*Produces powder-book from pocket and powders nose*)

BUSS. Walters makes me tired. Most of the cadet officers relax discipline outside of training hours, but not Walters. He likes the kowtowing.

BETTY. You speak as if you didn't like cadet training.

BUSS. Oh, it's all right enough, I suppose. A fellow can't be too particular when he's just hanging around hoping he'll have the luck to get into a real camp.

(*Enter WALTERS C.*)

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WALTERS. Good afternoon, young ladies. (*OMNES answer salutation. Buss springs up. WALTERS receives his salute with great solemnity*) A little more form, Buss. (*Arrogantly*) Shoulders up. Don't sag. (*After a moment turns away*)

LAURA. I'm so glad you've honored us with a visit, Mr. Walters.

VIVIAN. So am I. I want to ask your advice about these hospital socks I'm knitting——

WALTERS. (*With scarcely a glance at them*) Good work! Very good. As a military man my advice is quite at your disposal.

LAURA. Do take this rocking-chair. I'm sure you must be tired.

WALTERS. (*Accepts chair*) I am—rather.

LAURA. I'm afraid you've been overdoing yourself.

VIVIAN. We all think it's just noble—your giving your time this summer to the Redfield Cadets.

WALTERS. I am very glad indeed in company with other patriots to do my bit for my country.

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Unfortunately a slight trouble with my eyes prevented my enlistment, so I had to find other ways of service.

MATILDA. (*Bounces in at c. Her mouth is stained with what looks like slightly diluted ink*) Mr. Bergenfeld and Lena are coming down the hill!

BERNICE. Tildy! *What* did you do with that inky ice-cream!

MATILDA. (*Innocently*) Fed it to a pig.

BERNICE. (*Severely*) Look at yourself in that mirror! (*Indicates mirror on wall at L.*)

MATILDA. (*Does so. Covers mouth with hand*) Just tasted it to see if there was any glass! (*Runs off L.*)

(MR. BERGENFELD and LENA appear at c.)

BERGENFELD. Good afternoon, my friends.

BERNICE. Come right in, Mr. Bergenfeld. We're all delighted to see you.

VIVIAN. I should say so, when you're the man that gave that darling wonderful flag to the Red-field Cadets!

BERNICE. Of course you know Buss—(BERGENFELD *shakes hands with* BUSS) and I presume you know our teacher, Mr. Walters—

BERGENFELD. I believe I have met Mr. Walters—once. (*Shakes hands formally with* WALTERS)

MRS. SCROVINS. (*Enters at L. followed by* MATILDA, *who is still wiping the stains from her mouth on her apron*) Excuse me, please, for interrupting any conversation, but I have to have some help washing up tins if we're to have any more meals cooked in this house on account of having only one pair of hands, though my husband used to say they were very capable, as isn't commonly the case with blue eyes, though mine not being so *very*

blue when a baby but turning later, much to mother's disappointment who would have preferred brown she being one of a large family of ten children six boys, three blondes and one brunette who was the image of myself both having the same tendency to colds and dying of tonsilitis when a mere infant——

MATILDA. Ma means the other baby died, not her!

MRS. SCROVINS. Of course, child, which was exactly what I was saying in plain English, and——

BERNICE. Pardon me for interrupting, Mrs. Scrovins, but I want Mr. Bergenfeld to meet our housekeeper and chaperone—He's Lena's father.

MRS. SCROVINS. (*As BERGENFELD bows*) Well, you don't say so! And what must your feelings be to stand in a fatherly connection to the sweetest young woman in the world, and hoping my own Tildy will grow up the same, though my dear husband that always carried me around on his hands used to say—"A woman's emotions ain't a man's." which is or *was* the reason why he was opposed to Woman's Suffrage, though to my mind and not being in favor of picketing the White House there's arguments on both sides, and I hope your sweet daughter shows you around the establishment not forgetting the jelly, and the squalling creatures outside which more than eat their heads off, and I'm sure Mr Bergenfeld will agree with me, I don't care *what* Mr. Hoover says.

BERGENFELD. What creatures outside? I do not understand.

MATILDA. Ma means little pigs. We've got six and the mother.

MRS. SCROVINS. Which is exactly what I said in plain English, and I hope the young ladies take you out to the pens to see them, there being nothing men are more interested in than pigs unless it is the fe-

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male sex, which is something I've never been able to understand or explain, but as my dear husband used to say——

LENA. (*Trying to stop the flow of conversation*) Did you say you wanted some one to help wash up the tins, Mrs. Scrovins?

MRS. SCROVINS. (*Continues unheedingly*) "There's no accounting for tastes," and these pigs not being ordinary on account of the young ladies bringing them up and having almost human intelligence——

MATILDA. Ma means the pigs have human intelligence, she don't mean the young ladies have.

LENA. (*Who has been gradually drawing MRS. SCROVINS toward door L.*) I'll be glad to do my share right now.

MRS. SCROVINS. (*Back over her shoulder as she reaches door L.*) Which is exactly what I was saying, Tildy, and—(*LENA gets her off at L. gently but firmly and follows her*)

BERGENFELD. (*To BERNICE*) When your house-keeper has the so-fast conversation my brain cannot keep on the track of it. That is a joke what she has said about the pigs?

OMNES. Oh, no!

WALTERS. (*With veiled sarcasm*) Allow me to elucidate. Each of these lovely young ladies is highly patriotic. Each is a fervent disciple of a certain gentleman named Hoover, upon whom is devolving the task of preventing food scarcity in America. Each of these ladies, therefore, is proving her devotion to the cause by raising a pig to be sacrificed upon the butcher's block as an affecting tribute to her country. (*Takes drink from dipper in pail*)

BERGENFELD. Each gives a pig as tribute to America? That is interesting.

BUSS. Stuffing the pig one day and starving it

the next; so the bacon will have one streak of fat and one of lean.

BERNICE. Mine is a dignified dear, and I've named him Sir Francis Drake!

BETTY. I call mine Lizzie.

VIVIAN. Mine's Esmeralda. I once knew the sweetest country girl named Esmeralda, so I thought it would be an exquisitely appropriate name for a pig.

ALBERTA. I call mine Pure Food!

MATILDA. But I like Cleopatra the best of any of 'em 'cause she's got the kinkiest tail!

MRS. SCROVINS. (*Calling from off L.*) Tildy!

MATILDA. Yes, Ma, I'm comin'. (*Runs off L.*)

BERNICE. (*To Mr. BERGENFELD, who has been standing before her father's picture examining it intently*) Don't you admire our wall decorations, Mr. Bergenfeld? Each girl has a certain space to fill in as she likes, and this is mine.

BERGENFELD. (*His tone kind to the point of flattery*) Your good father, eh? Inventor of the wonderful O'cutt Torpedo, which the newspapers announce may prove America's most powerful weapon against the submarine. I am much interested in your father's invention. He has the great brain, eh?

BERNICE. (*With great pride*) Brain? I should say so. Frank and I are so proud of him, it's all we can do to keep from spoiling him.

BERGENFELD. It is not treating him with respect that the papers give so little space to such a big invention—they should honor him with a whole page.

BERNICE. Oh, they'd be glad to do that, and print pictures of it and everything, but it would be against Daddy's express orders, you know.

BERGENFELD. Yes?

BERNICE. Because there's always danger that the Germans—the *wicked* Germans, I mean—would

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get hold of it. Father's just daffy on keeping mum. Why, even my brother who works right in the factory with him doesn't know the secret of his invention—the thing that makes it better than other torpedoes, you know.

BERGENFELD. (*Playfully*) But you, little shining eyes, may coax it from him some day just for fun, as they say, to get the better of your brother, eh?

(LENA enters at L.; immediately she shows intense interest in the conversation.)

BERNICE. (*Amused at the idea*) That would be a joke on Frank, all right.

BERGENFELD. Come over here, my Lena. (LENA crosses to his side, but looks worried and uneasy as the conversation progresses) Ah, these daughters with their smiles and their coaxing ways—what cannot they find out from a father if they try? They have us at their mercy—and the worst of it is—we are pleased at last to tell them any secret they may want to know.

BERNICE. Oh, I've found out one secret already, and that without trying at all.

BERGENFELD. What—a secret concerning the big torpedo?

BERNICE. Well—sort of concerning it—yes.

BERGENFELD. No!

LAURA. Oh, yes, Mr. Bergenfeld, that's right! Bernice knows one real war secret which she has managed to keep to herself in spite of all our teasing.

BETTY. She's been lording it over the rest of us girls ever since we've been in camp on account of it.

VIVIAN. We've bet her five boxes of candy that she couldn't keep it from us until the camp broke up, but it looks as if we were going to lose.

BERGENFELD. (*Making light of it in his heavy German way*) But of course it is nothing important—just big enough to make a joke about.

BERNICE. That's where you're wrong, Mr. Bergenfeld. It's so important Daddy'd be scared to death if he realized I knew it, because he imagines I can't keep anything to myself. And just think—I learned it by accident!

BERGENFELD. (*Still with attempted lightness*) That is interesting, child, but an important secret can hardly be found out by accident.

BERNICE. (*Wishing to be taken seriously*) I don't like to contradict you, Mr. Bergenfeld, but this secret is very important indeed. I can tell you this much—just as I've already told the girls:—it's the pass-word that admits the workmen into the last room where the torpedoes are put together. There's only a dozen men allowed in there—all Russians, who can hardly speak a word of English, and because they all look alike the watchman might make a mistake and admit a stranger, so they had to give them a special pass-word. That's my secret—that pass-word! I overheard Daddy telling brother Frank what it was, but wild horses couldn't drag it out of me.

BERGENFELD. And you have not confided the secret to even one of your trusted schoolmates?

BERNICE. (*Proudly*) No, not even to Lena—and I'd trust Lena with just anything on earth—except a war secret! I wouldn't trust one of those to an angel in heaven.

LENA. (*Uneasily, as BERGENFELD is about to interrogate BERNICE further*) Father, wouldn't you like to take a walk to the summit of the hill? You can see into the next county from there—miles and miles!

BERGENFELD. What? While I am being so kindly entertained by your good little friend?

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(*Enter MRS. SCROVINS at L.*)

MRS. SCROVINS. (*MATILDA enters in the midst of MRS. SCROVINS' remarks*) And I hope you'll all excuse me for interrupting, it not being a thing I do as a rule, knowing exactly my place as a house-keeper and general helper, although it not being the station I ever was intended to occupy when I was married as a mere child and my hair put up for the first time as I was led to the altar, but now the occasion seems to demand it, the fence being far from what a fence should be, and the capers of Sir Francis Drake along with Esmeralda and Pure Food——

MATILDA. Ma means the pigs have broke out and are runnin' over the garden.

BETTY. Mercy me! Why didn't you say so before? (*Exit at c. BETTY, LAURA, ALBERTA and VIVIAN, each calling the name of her particular pig. MATILDA and MRS. SCROVINS follow them*)

BERNICE. (*To BUSS*) No use chasing those pigs. They'll take to the woods and we'll never find them again.

BUSS. It's turkeys that take to the woods. Don't be scared—with my long legs we'll round 'em up all right.

BERNICE. All right, then—come on! (*Exits c.*)

BUSS. Come on, Walters.

WALTERS. (*Stiffly*) As I have remarked before, a private does not address his superior officer informally.

BUSS. Oh, chuck that and come on!

WALTERS. And an officer does not chase pigs.

BUSS. Then stay there, but if you weren't my superior officer, I have an opinion I'd like to express about you. (*Exits c.*)

BERGENFELD. I see you have enjoyed yourself here, my daughter. It is the best of all that you

have made the other young ladies your friends. That is what I did expect of you.

LENA. I want to see you, Father—alone.

WALTERS. What did I tell you, Mr. Bergenfeld? Your daughter always finds some pretext for getting rid of me. Well, I'm off! (*Starts for door c.*)

BERGENFELD. No, stay! (*WALTERS turns and hesitates*) We do not wish to leave Mr. Walters out of our conversation, eh, daughter? Good, kind Mr. Walters who is our friend and the friend of Germany?

LENA. Germany pays him in gold for his friendship, Father. Then why should you always expect me to feel so—so—grateful to him?

WALTERS. That's the stand she's taken toward me from the start, and I tell you, Mr. Bergenfeld, it's not very pleasant.

BERGENFELD. I am surprised at you, Lena—you have never spoken out like this against any wish of your father's before. And you will turn a new leaf over in the future. Mr. Walters is not alone that he works for the reward of gold. Everybody in this America works for gold. They dream of it by night and scheme for it by day. What is America's part in the war but the stratagem of moneyed men to get more gold? And is it not better to work for gold for the cause that is right—for Germany? than to work for gold and the wrong as this whole country is doing? And Mr. Walters should be paid not only in money, but in our faithful friendship also. Do you understand me?

LENA. I—I'll try to regard him differently. Father.

WALTERS. Thank you, Mr. Bergenfeld, for setting me right.

LENA. I wish you'd take me back to town with you, Father. I don't want to stay here any longer.

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BERGENFELD. The time for that is not yet. Have you not been happy?

LENA. Too happy—happier than I had any right to be. The girls have been so good to me, and it's been so jolly and pleasant, I've just given myself up to the enjoyment of it all—to the only *young* care-free days I ever had in my life. I almost forgot I was winning their friendship for a purpose—that there would be a price I'd have to pay for every one of those happy hours. But your letter brought it all back—when you asked me what I had been able to do for Germany. Well, I've done nothing so far, I confess it. I've only won a confidence I do not deserve.

BERGENFELD. Be not discouraged. Confidence is the foundation for much—for everything it is plain before me you shall do.

LENA. You—you mean you have a special and definite task for me?

BERGENFELD. Yes, you can be of great service to the Fatherland if your pink and white face does not betray the heart temperament too easily.

LENA. Oh, Father, before you ask it of me—before you tell me what it is you expect of me—I must know if you are sure, very sure, Germany is in the right! Why, since I've been here in camp, I've heard so many stories of revolting cruelty—atrocities terrible beyond speech——

BERGENFELD. Such reports are to be expected in a place like this, but they are lies—I have told you that before—all lies! You believe me, do you not?

LENA. I did believe you, Father, and I must keep on believing you, or even my love for you, even my respect for your authority could not keep me from turning against Germany and all she stands for. Why, they say she is determined to dominate the world through her very frightfulness!

BERGENFELD. To dominate the world—yes—but through the highest motives of right and justice. To dominate the world because already the Germans are a race of supermen—because already their civilization is the finest, because “Deutschland Uber Alles” means the welfare of all mankind. Ah, you have only the woman-brain—you cannot see the big vision as I do, but remember your faithful sister whose husband is a loyal subject of the Kaiser—remember the grandchild who is a fine little German—and be true!

LENA. My sister—little Rudolph—yes, my love is with them! What do you want me to do, Father?

BERGENFELD. Something that would be very simple. Obtain from the little chatterbox friend the pass-word that admits the Russian workmen to her father’s factory. It is the thing we have been working for—an entrance to the heart of it.

LENA. But why? What do you want to do?

BERGENFELD. There, there, don’t look so frightened! We will not go to the extreme—no bombs—no blowing up——

LENA. Oh, I’m so relieved, Father, to hear you say that! My heart was right in my throat. You know I’d not consent—I couldn’t—to anything that risked human life. War or no war, that would mean murder!

WALTERS. Sh! Not so loud. You see—all I want is to carry in my camera and get some pictures of the machinery.

BERGENFELD. Pictures to be sent to Germany. With only such small aid to guide them, the master minds there would find a way to combat the new danger, or to turn it to uses of their own.

LENA. (*To WALTERS*) Will you give me your word of honor that if I succeed in getting the pass-word for you, it will mean bodily harm to no one?

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WALTERS. No one unless it be myself—my word of honor! I'll be taking as big chances if caught with my camera as if I were stuck down in one of those stinking French trenches when a gas attack was on.

BERGENFELD. It is for you to get the pass-word at once, Lena. Every hour increases the danger against Germany.

LENA. Of course, try as I may, there is a chance it will be impossible——

BERGENFELD. Impossible is a word we Germans do not bow to in recognition.

LENA. I'll try my best, Father, but you must realize the suffering it's going to cost me. Bernice is my friend—it will be betraying her, betraying her brother Frank——

WALTERS. Now we're coming to the groundwork of it a'll! I told you she thought too much of young Olcutt.

BERGENFELD. Nonsense, it is but a silly boy-and-girl friendship!

LENA. At least, Father, you will let me go away from here after I have succeeded? I can't stay and be a hypocrite. I must say good-bye to Bernice and her brother—forever.

BERGENFELD. Yes, yes, you shall then come away, and for the friends you give up there will be others.

WALTERS. Your daughter need never lack for attention, if that's what she's thinking of, and from those that stand considerably higher than young Olcutt.

BERGENFELD. The next time Mr. Walters comes to the house, you will be kinder, eh, my daughter?

LENA. Why not? After I have tricked and deceived the Olcutts, what difference will anything make? (*Begins to laugh hysterically—her laughter turns to sobs and she rushes out of doors*)

BERGENFELD. She will be different in time, very different. My word in my family is law.

WALTERS. Well, I hope so. It humiliates a man to have the girl he admires treat him like the dirt under her feet.

BERGENFELD. She will give you the smile of welcome in future.

WALTERS. If she doesn't, it wouldn't be beyond me to throw up my job.

BERGENFELD. What's that?

WALTERS. I say if it happens that you can't get Lena to be friends with me after all——

BERGENFELD. (*Sternly*) Whether that turns out one way or the other, there must be no more talk of your giving up the job or I will take you at your word—and then what?

WALTERS. Well, of course—I spoke hastily.

BUSS. (*Rushes in at c.*) Where's that clothes-line? (*Runs into WALTERS and almost knocks him over. Grabs a coil of rope hanging up by the door*) Excuse me, but Sir Francis Drake has started for the Pacific, and I'm after him. (*Exits at c. running into VIVIAN as she enters*)

VIVIAN. Esmeralda keeps running round and round in a circle and I know she'll wind up with vertigo. Oh, Mr. Walters, would you mind helping me?

WALTERS. Well, it isn't exactly in my line, but——

VIVIAN. Oh, please! (*Takes him by arm and he unwillingly goes with her out at c.*)

BERGENFELD. (*At door*) Lena!

LENA. (*Heard off*) Yes, Father. (*In a moment she appears at c. Dries her eyes and smooths back her hair*) I'm all right now.

BERGENFELD. You must not allow yourself to lose your wits even for a moment, for in that moment your chance may come and go. And I

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want you to remember about this young Olcott—that he is an enemy to your country.

LENA. I know—in my thoughts I have already given him up.

BERGENFELD. Keep the mind only on the one duty—to obtain the pass-word from the little chat-terbox. Hard or easy, it must be done.

BERNICE. (*Entering at c.*) Such a race! I don't know that I'll ever see Blunderbuss or Sir Francis Drake again. Mr. Bergenfeld, I hope you don't think we're always as undignified as we are to-day.

BERGENFELD. I have enjoyed my visit very much and am glad to say so before I go.

BERNICE. Oh, you aren't going so soon, are you? Please stay! Lena has made the most delectable pie for supper you ever tasted!

BERGENFELD. Unfortunately the very small motor-car which I have hired by the hour is waiting for me at the foot of the hill, also I have an objection to driving it in the dark.

BERNICE. And I just love to drive in the dark, only Papa and Frank have a feeling that I shouldn't. Sometimes I think I'd rather be a wax figure in a show-window than just a girl. Wax figures can't have any burning emotions about being watched over and guarded from danger against their wills the way I have.

BERGENFELD. Well, I will say Auf Wiedersehen.

BERNICE. Good-bye, Mr. Bergenfeld. You'll excuse me if I put it into American, for while I know you're perfectly loyal and all that, *anything* German just now——

BERGENFELD. Your patriotism does you credit. So too will I say—good-bye. And to my daughter good-bye also. (*Kisses LENA on forehead*) And you will not forget to do your work quickly and

with faithfulness. (*Steps just outside door with LENA*)

BERNICE. (*Calls after him*) She always does that without being told.

BERGENFELD. I hope you are right. (*Nods and smiles and walks away. LENA stands for a moment looking after him. BERNICE crosses to L. and looks at herself in the big glass*)

BERNICE. (*As LENA re-enters at c.*) I'm a perfect sight from chasing those pesky pigs. But I suppose there's nothing to do but just go back to it again. (*She takes hand-glass from a drawer and looks in mirror at back of her head, then lays hand-glass on top of desk*)

LENA. No, don't do that. Sit down. We haven't had a real comfy chat for a long time, have we, dear?

BERNICE. (*Sits down on couch beside LENA*) Not for ages!

LENA. Let's be real chummy and tell each other some secrets.

BERNICE. Secrets? (*Excitedly*) Why, Lena, do you mean that you and Frank have become enga—?

LENA. (*Interrupts, hastily*) No, no, nothing like that. I mean just—anything—real interesting we know that we haven't yet told anybody else. Sometimes I think it's a—a relief telling somebody else—don't you?

BERNICE. Well, you tell yours first.

LENA. Well, mine is that—that I'm going to leave camp in a day or two instead of staying on another month as all the girls expect.

BERNICE. Oh, I'm awfully sorry to hear that. I suppose your father's visit hadn't anything to do with it. Hm?

LENA. Yes. Now it's your turn.

BERNICE. Well, I never had but one real secret in my life, and that's the pass-word to that torpedo-

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room. But of course I'd be drawn and quartered before I told that to you or anyone else.

LENA. But suppose I guessed it?

BERNICE. Lena! What on earth are you talking about?

LENA. I don't wonder you ask, Bernice, but I've been reading such an interesting book lately on telepathy and thought-transference—(*At a loss how to proceed*)—er—do you believe in telepathy?

BERNICE. Mercy, don't ask me such embarrassing questions! Don't even know what telepathy means. But I'm sure that even if I did I wouldn't believe in it. I never believe in things that have a lot of syllables—they worry my head.

LENA. Oh, but you'd like the book I'm telling you about. It gives the most interesting experiments you can imagine. For instance, suppose you put your mind on a certain word that has been in your thought, lately, and keep it there——

BERNICE. That wouldn't be hard—that old pass-word just haunts me!

LENA. And then write it down a few times just for further concentration——

(*Enter BETTY, VIVIAN, ALBERTA and LAURA, all shrieking with laughter.*)

BETTY. (*Finally recovering her breath*) Oh, save me, or I shall laugh myself to death!

VIVIAN. And when Mr. Walters is so dignified! (*Laughs again*)

LAURA. And to think it was sweet country Esmeralda that did the trick!

BERNICE. Did what trick, girls? What are you laughing about?

(*LENA has crossed to desk in front of big slanting mirror at L. While other girls are occupied*

with the joke, she picks up an envelope to look at address as reflected in mirror. Then she lays it on desk and takes hand-glass and turns her back on mirror as if to straighten her hair. Shows she is trying to read superscription on envelope by looking into small mirror and catching thus the reflected image of the envelope in the big mirror. This is done very unostentatiously so the girls do not remark the experiment at all. She lays glass down again after the girls address her.)

VIVIAN. At poor Mr. Walters! He was doing his best to help me, you know, and keep his uniform immaculate at the same time, and just as he came within falling distance of the most heavenly mud-puddle—(*Girls shriek with laughter again*) Esmeralda ran between his legs and tripped him up. He sat down perfectly flat. You can imagine!

BETTY. Even Laura's devotion wasn't proof against the spectacle he made as he picked himself up!

BERNICE. Oh, why did I miss it? (*Laughs*)

BETTY. Lena, you haven't even smiled!

LENA. Perhaps because I was absorbed in thinking of an experiment Bernice and I were about to try just as you came in—an experiment in telepathy.

BETTY. (*With enthusiasm*) Do go on with it! Don't let us interrupt. I started to read a book on telepathy once, but didn't finish it.

VIVIAN. Can't we be in on the experiment too? Oh, I think anything mental is just too weirdly fascinating for expression!

LENA. I don't believe it could be managed with so many—(*As if with a new thought*) though, after all, perhaps it can. Bernice, you sit over

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here by the desk and the rest of us will stand a short distance away from you with our backs turned!

BERNICE. (*Seats herself at desk. Girls arrange themselves in a semi-circle and turn their backs*) All right. What next?

LENA. Now you take that soft pencil there—we haven't any ink—and write large and clear to help your concentration some word of great importance to you for us to read from your mind. We'll say—a word like—(*Pauses as if trying to think*)

VIVIAN. Blunderbuss!

BERNICE. *He's* not important.

LENA. Well—er—say the password you were talking about. (*She picks up the hand-mirror and holds it down at her side unseen by others*)

BERNICE. But I'd rather not write that.

ALBERTA. She's afraid of giving us girls a chance to win those boxes of candy.

LENA. (*With carefully studied though pleasant sarcasm*) Oh, of course if you are afraid—(*Pauses*)

BERNICE. But I'm not. If there's one thing on earth that makes me mad it is for Blunderbuss or other people to think I'm afraid of anything. I'll write the password big and strong. I don't think there's "no sech animal" as Telepathy anyhow. Of course you're all on your honor not to turn around?

LENA. (*Who stands nearest to BERNICE*) Of course. (*Turns her back*) Now you write the word, then sit with your eyes fixed upon it while each of us tries to guess it. As soon as any girl thinks she's got it, she's to speak out! Ready now—write!

(BERNICE writes. LENA apparently arranging hair over her forehead, carefully moves hand-glass

until she catches the reflection of the word from reflection in large mirror. Then she lowers glass again. VIVIAN giggles)

ALBERTA. Stop giggling. I almost had something, and you stopped it!

BETTY. Sh! 'Tisn't fair to talk.

(A short silence.)

LENA. *(Slowly)* I do get an impression of something—the name of a state.

BERNICE. Why, Lena, that's perfectly wonderful! Which state?

LENA. Florida.

(OMNES turn around.)

VIVIAN. Has she guessed it?

BETTY. Do tell us!

BERNICE. She almost took my breath away, she came so near, but she didn't get it after all. Oh, I'm so relieved! My goodness, I don't know what I ever chose that particular word for anyhow, because if she really had guessed it——

LENA. Well, a miss is as good as a mile!

BETTY. And it was awfully interesting, though the only word I could think of to save my life was "pigs."

ALBERTA. Isn't it nearly supper time?

BERNICE. Mercy, I hope not yet! Girls, let's all get our bathing-suits and go down to the pool to freshen up. Come on, Lena.

LENA. No, I—I'm feeling a little tired, so I won't go this time.

BERNICE. *(Tears up name she has written and throws it in waste-basket)* Well, if you change your mind you'll know where to find us. *(Exits R. singing "Over There" in which BETTY, LAURA and VIVIAN join as they follow her)*

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LENA. (*Left alone. Speaks in intense whisper*) "Nevada!" Oh, father—I—now that I've done it—(*She drops her head on the desk and begins to cry*)

OLCUTT. (*Appears in door c.*) Lena!

LENA. Oh—(*Starts up and dries her eyes hastily*)

OLCUTT. Why, what's the matter? What has happened to upset you?

LENA. Nothing—much—I—I didn't know anyone had come in.

OLCUTT. I know—the little girl's homesick!

LENA. Yes, that's it. I want to go home—to get away from here.

OLCUTT. Have the girls been unkind to you again?

LENA. No, no, you mustn't think that.

OLCUTT. Nevertheless, I'll speak to Bernice.

LENA. But it isn't Bernice—it isn't anybody. Bernice has just gone down to the swimming-pool. Shan't I call her back? (*Starts toward door c.*)

OLCUTT. No, don't call her back. Why, I've been aching for a chance to talk with you alone. I wanted you to be the first to hear some important news—that is, important to me.

LENA. News? What about?

OLCUTT. Cast your eye upon America's future foremost aviator.

LENA. You mean you've—enlisted?

OLCUTT. This morning, in the aviation branch of the service. Next week—at the latest—I quit Dad's factory to go into training.

LENA. That means you're on the American side forever, doesn't it?

OLCUTT. Of course. It would have meant that even if I'd stayed on at the factory. Well, aren't you going to congratulate me?

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LENA. Yes, yes, of course—only—I thought you were needed at the factory.

OLCUTT. At first it did seem my duty to stay there, but things are running now so well Dad can get along without me. And he seemed to know how hard hit I'd be if the war ended without my having had a whack at it. He's pretty wonderful, Dad is. He didn't put up the ghost of a yell about how bad he'd feel if his only son—well, you know there is a big risk, but all he said was: "I'll be proud to give you for your country, boy." You see, one *has* to serve his country.

LENA. Yes, I know. One *has* to serve his country—no matter how great the cost! (*After a slight pause*) It will be hard—for Bernice to see you go.

OLCUTT. The dear old kid!—I suppose so. But somehow I wasn't thinking much of Bernice as I came along, but of another girl. I suppose when a chap knows the chances are about even that he never comes back, he hasn't any right to ask a girl to wait for him, but at the same time the thought that maybe she was waiting and thinking of him—Lena!

LENA. Oh, please—you mustn't! It's time you realized that I'm not one of you Americans after all, that I can't ever be. You mustn't ask me—anything.

OLCUTT. That's all nonsense about your not being American. But if you mean I've been mistaken, and that you don't care for me—(*She turns away—silent*) Lena, I don't believe it. I know! It's your father. He's developed some secret prejudice against me—thinks I'm a slacker maybe?

LENA. No, please don't think that. I'm doing this of my own free will. Every girl is apt to change her mind—and I've changed mine.

OLCUTT. So suddenly? Why, Lena, that

doesn't seem possible. The understanding between us began back there the night of the Senior Reception. You remember that walk home in the moonlight and how I covered your little hand with mine as it rested there on my arm—and ever since then, Lena——

LENA. (*Harshly, to cover her emotion*) What's the use talking about what is past and gone?

OLCUTT. You've grown to like someone better? Is that the answer? Is it your memory of some other man that has come between us?

LENA. Yes, the memory of some other man.

OLCUTT. Walters?

LENA. I—I—my father approves of him.

(OLCUTT, *with an inarticulate expression of distress turns away and covers his face with his hands.*)

LENA. I'm sorry to have hurt you.

OLCUTT. I'll be over it in a minute. What was it Dad said? "A soldier has to learn to take hard blows without wincing." But sometimes a chap forgets he's a soldier and wants to blubber instead like a kid. (*Recovering*) I'm all right, now, though. Lena, I won't be a hypocrite and try to say pleasant things about Walters—you know I never liked him. And of course I've got to return it—that snapshot I took of you the morning of the Senior Reception.

LENA. I'd forgotten all about that snap-shot.

OLCUTT. (*Takes some green cards from a wallet and shuffles through them*) It's here somewhere among these new green cards—cards of admission to Dad's factory. By the way, the paper can't be duplicated, and each one carries Dad's own signature. Of course they won't take the place of the password until each blooming Rus-

sian inserts his own name which will be sometime before sundown when I get back——

LENA. Those cards take the place of the pass-word, you say?

OLCUTT. Yes, we've abolished the pass-word system.

LENA. Since when?

OLCUTT. This morning.

LENA. Absolutely?

OLCUTT. Absolutely—yes. This plan is safer. Dad was afraid some one might pump one of those guileless Russians. The word was rather simple—"Nevada"—and—(*Comes upon the snap-shot*) Here's your picture! (*Holds it on top of several cards in his hand*)

LENA. That? (*Reaches out for picture and as if by accident knocks the cards from his hands*) Oh, excuse me! How clumsy I am!

OLCUTT. That's nothing. I'll pick them up. (*Before he can stoop to pick up the cards, LENA puts her foot on one of them, concealing it. OLCUTT, gathering up remainder of cards, restores them to his pocket. The snap-shot is in his hand and he studies it earnestly*) Here you are, with that smile and that half-frightened look in your eyes that used to make me want to defend you against the universe in general and everybody in particular. After all, it won't hurt Walters for me to have it. I never sympathized before with the chap that said half a loaf was better than no bread at all, but now I do.

LENA. It would give you pleasure to keep it?

OLCUTT. Yes, because that would mean we're still friends—and somehow even your friendship will be a mighty pleasant thought to me when I'm sailing around up there in the blue sky—and if I don't come back——

LENA. Don't speak about not coming back.

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OLCUTT. That slipped out by accident. As Dad says—a soldier hasn't any right to turn on the sob-stuff—it doesn't do any good. We'll say—when I come back, I'll still be thinking of you as my friend—even if Walters has a prior claim. So—may I take the picture along with me?

LENA. Yes, and I want to say again how sorry I am to have caused you any unhappiness——

WALTERS. Now, don't fuss about me—I'm taking it all right. And remember—whatever happens—you're always going to be my friend.

LENA. (*As he takes her hand*) Yes, your friend—always.

OLCUTT. (*Breaks away with an effort*) Well, I'm off. (*Whistles a military air as he exits c.*)

LENA. (*Looks after him*) Your friend—your false, false friend! (*Steps off card and picks it up*)

WALTERS. (*Appears just outside c. from R. and looks off L. after OLCUTT*) Whistle away, old chap, but you may change your tune before long.

LENA. (*Startled at his timely appearance*) You!

WALTERS. (*Enters at c.*) Yes, it's I. I had to duck into the training quarters and change clothes after being made a fool of by those silly girls and their pig-chasing, but I dropped in again to say that as soon as you've made any discoveries worth while——

LENA. (*Without enthusiasm*) I have made them—already.

WALTERS. What? Did you get the pass-word?

LENA. (*Rapidly*) The pass-word isn't used now—they've issued special cards of admission instead. There's one of them. Never mind how I got it. It's signed by Jonathan Olcutt himself. All you have to do is to fill in with the workman's name

you've decided on, and use your wits for the rest of it.

WALTERS. (*Examines card she has given him*) Why, you're a marvel! This is fine! Couldn't be better.

LENA. (*Hand to throat—staggers slightly*) Oh, I'm smothered!

WALTERS. Reaction, that's all. You've been under a terrible strain to get this—that's plain. But now you can take it easy. Your father and I will see to the rest. I'm on the high road to fortune, Lena. Those Germans are free with their money. I needn't drudge along as a school-teacher forever. This will give me a start, and I'll make good on Wall Street instead. I've always wanted to dabble in stocks. We'll climb—we'll climb! I've been crazy about you since you first came into the school. It's your eyes—they're hypnotic! That's why I went into this—it gave me a chance to be near you and to feather your own nest besides. You understand that?

LENA. Yes, I understand.

WALTERS. And now that we're hand and glove on this deal—what's the use of being so cold? Lena—(*Tries to grasp her hand*)

LENA. Let me go—let me go! I hate you! I don't know which I hate most, you or myself!

Curtain.

ACT III

SCENE: *Same as in ACT I except that it has almost lost its identity as a school-room. The special school furnishings have been cleared away, except perhaps the map on wall and*

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desk at L. A telephone has been installed on desk. There is a small table at R. on which are heaped Red Cross supplies. Boxes and bundles are stacked about on desk and floor stamped with the Red Cross emblem. A placard prominently placed bears words "Red Cross Headquarters". A big American flag with pulley-ropes attached leans against wall near door C. Large clock on shelf at R. Chairs, etc.

TIME: *Evening of the same day.*

DISCOVERED: *Michael, setting clock. He waits for it to strike, then crosses to L. and puts hand on one of the electric buttons. Darkness follows, save for a shaft of moonlight that falls through window at L., and the corridor remains lighted.*

BERNICE. *(Outside the darkened room, comes into view in corridor with LENA at C.)* Oh, Michael, do snap those lights on again! It won't take us but a minute, but we want to use the telephone.

MICHAEL. *(Speaks from darkness)* Telephone ain't public—only for thim that belongs to the Red Cross.

BERNICE. Well, for goodness sakes don't I belong, and haven't I just driven in ten miles from camp to get here?

MICHAEL. *(Snaps on lights)* Excuse me, Miss Olcutt, I didn't know you in that funny hat, and besides that, you've not been round here lately—nor Miss Bergenfeld.

(BERNICE and LENA come into room.)

BERNICE. No, none of us camp-fire girls have, though they'll all be in to-morrow to attend the

special Red Cross meeting. Lena and I are just a little bit in advance of them, that's all. You see, she got uneasy about her father because she thought he didn't look well when he visited the camp to-day, thought I tell her it's just imagination—and took a sudden notion she wanted to come to town. A plain case of homesickness, I call it.

LENA. (*Who has seated herself at desk and taken receiver from 'phone*) I do hope I'll get him at the store. (*Speaks into 'phone*) Give me 677. Ring 2, please.

BERNICE. (*Lowers her voice a bit and explains to MICHAEL*) We stopped to let her off at her house as we came by, but it was all shut up and dark as Egypt. I told her Mr. Bergenfeld must be well, or he'd be at home in bed.

LENA. (*Eagerly, at 'phone*) Yes?

BERNICE. Sh! (*Claps hand over her mouth to keep from interrupting LENA*)

LENA. Thank you. Please call me. (*To BERNICE*) The line's busy, so I don't know whether he's there or not.

BERNICE. Well, somebody must be there, and they can tell you about him. (*Goes just outside door c. and calls off to L.*) Come on up, Mrs. Scrovins! The wire's busy and we've got to wait! (*MRS. SCROVINS is heard to reply in the distance.*)

LENA. Sorry to delay your closing up, Michael, but I didn't want to wake up any of the neighbors at this hour of the night—and as we saw the lights were still on here——

MICHAEL. That's all right. In war times I suppose we're in luck to be getting any sleep at all! You must be tired, the both of yez, after a ten mile drive along a bumpy road.

BERNICE. Well, I don't know how Lena feels, but personally I'm fresh as a daisy. I want you to understand, Michael, that Mrs. Scrovins, Lena,

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Tildy and I came in all the way by ourselves, and that I did the driving!

(*Enter MRS. SCROVINS and MATILDA at C. MATILDA yawns and shows signs of going to sleep on her feet.*)

MICHAEL. Widout no man at all?

BERNICE. (*Airly*) A male being would have been entirely superfluous, and half the time it was so dark you couldn't see your hand before your face.

MICHAEL. What kind of a horse did you have?

MRS. SCROVINS. A calico one belonging to Mr. Doyle the milkman—she borrowed it along with a covered wagon with a step on the back and doors you can open to get out the milk cans when an extry seat isn't put in for passengers as was the case to-night, and all the way in I was wondering what would happen if that horse should run away——

MICHAEL. 'Twould be a miracle that happened if he ran away—I know the horse.

BERNICE. (*A bit crestfallen*) Well, I acknowledge that he wasn't exactly wild, and that I had to smack him with the reins sometimes to speed him up. But anyhow I've done something to show Stephen Buss he's not so important as he thinks he is and that a girl can turn around sometimes without depending on a man to look out for her and tell her which is East and which is West. Oh, independence is a glorious feeling!

MRS. SCROVINS. Though if that horse had happened to be taken on the way in that blackest stretch of woods with appendicitis which is the scientific name for colic and which is one and the same thing and affects man and animals alike, as I can prove from having had a cousin operated on at an expense of three hundred dollars, and the Doctor carelessly

dropping his eye-glasses in the wound which caused him to be laid wide open again and for the second time——

MATILDA. (*Yawningly, but with patient determination*) Ma means 'twa'n't the Doctor that was laid wide open for the second time, but her cousin.

MRS. SCROVINS. Just exactly my own words in plain language, and as anyone acquainted with Doctors should know, cutting folks wide open being their business which they have to do to make a living, only in this case the Doctor being set on getting his eye-glasses back again made it especially hard for Cousin Leander being only rolled plate anyhow——

MATILDA. Ma meant it wasn't her cousin that was rolled plate, but—(*Yawns*) What ails my mouth? It keeps floppin' open.

MICHAEL. It's time for any mouth to flop open past eleven at night.

LENA. So sorry! I hope I won't have to detain you all much longer. Why don't they call me. I wonder? (*Begins to pace the floor*) I must find out where my father is—I must speak with him!

BERNICE. When these quiet, self-contained girls do get homesick, look out! They're much worse than the cry-baby kind.

LENA. (*Nervously*) What if Father shouldn't be at the store? What if he hasn't been there all evening?

BERNICE. Then probably he went to the movies. Good heavens, Lena, anyone would think from the way you act that your father was in his second childhood and couldn't find his way around!

(*The sound of an exploding tire is heard.*)

LENA. (*Wildly*) What is that?

MICHAEL. A busted tire and some cuss words from that man that's driving.

LENA. Are you sure? I—I thought it sounded like a big explosion of some kind.

BERNICE. What an idea! But I suppose we all think of such things more or less now that we're actually in the war. I know I do, for I know perfectly well that Dad's factory is the first thing the Germans would blow up if they ever landed in Redfield. (*She is close to window at L. and turns toward it*) Look, Lena, you can see the lights in the windows from here. They keep some of them burning all night long! (*LENA comes to side of BERNICE*)

LENA. Yes, I see.

BERNICE. (*Who has hold of LENA's hand*) Why, your hand is like ice. I believe you've a regular nervous chill! (*Crosses to telephone on desk*) That wire can't have been busy all this time. I'll call up your father's store myself. (*The 'phone rings just as she is ready to use it*) At last! (*Takes 'phone*) Hulloo! Is this Mr. Bergenfeld? (*Slight pause*) Well, how do, Mr. Bergenfeld, this is Bernice Olcutt speaking. I'm 'phoning for Lena.

LENA. (*Murmurs her relief*) Then he is there—thank heaven!

BERNICE. (*Continues at 'phone*) We're here in town at the Red Cross Rooms at the Academy. Lena tried to get into the house but couldn't. (*Pause*) No, just homesick—a very bad case of it. Four of us drove in together and if you'd like to have her stay all night with me—(*Pause*) No, of course not, if you object. Yes. I'll tell her. Good-night. (*Turns, rises*) You are to wait here, Lena, and he'll come by for you from the store. I must say he didn't seem highly overjoyed that you had come in—I'm afraid he almost blames me for bringing you.

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LENA. I suppose it was foolish of me——

BERNICE. He said you were to wait—that he expects to be here in about twenty minutes.

MICHAEL. (*Looks at watch*) Well, I'll read the war news over again to keep awake until everybody's out. (*Exits at c. and off R.*)

LENA. I seem to be making trouble for everyone.

BERNICE. Nothing of the kind, you dear thing, though I must say I was rather surprised at the way your father spoke. Why, *my* Dad, bless his dear old bald head, would almost perish with delight if he thought I'd driven ten miles just because I'd got so homesick I couldn't live without him.

LENA. It wasn't homesickness, exactly, and Father knew it. He probably guesses I've been imagining all sorts of horrible things that couldn't possibly happen——

BERNICE. I know what's the matter with you, Lena—too much bothering with that telepathy stuff. You've been nervous ever since you tried that experiment about the pass-word—now, own up, haven't you?

LENA. Yes—that's true—I—I have.

BERNICE. I've always heard that any of that spook business was just awful on the nerves, and now I believe it.

BUSS. (*Suddenly enters at c.*) Hullo!

BERNICE. Buss! Of all people.

BUSS. Just wanted to say that if you're going to stick around here much longer I'd better hitch that old Calico horse.

BERNICE. Sure enough, I never thought about hitching him. I suppose I got it in my head he couldn't go until his engine was started—like our automobile. Did he try to run away?

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BUSS. Nope. At least not while I was watching him.

BERNICE. And how long has that been? How on earth did you happen to be in Redfield anyhow?

BUSS. Came down from camp on the wagon.

BERNICE. What wagon?

BUSS. Doyle's, along with you.

BERNICE. (*Indignantly*) You didn't!

BUSS. Rode on the back step except when you slowed up, then I hopped off and walked. Only trouble was to run slow enough not to get ahead of the horse!

BERNICE. And you actually dare tell me you came all the way from camp with us and didn't let me know? Why?

BUSS. Thought you wouldn't like it if I did let you know, but I'd made up my mind four women oughtn't to take a trip like that without some man along in case of an emergency.

BERNICE. Well, I never! (*Sits, very angry*)

MRS. SCROVINS. Come to think of it, I did hear footsteps a pattering behind us, or thought I did, but not being one of the kind that spreads alarm as my poor dear husband well knew even though it might be a wild animal, I sat silent though perspiring, but the thanks of all of us I'm sure are due you for your protecting presence, Mr. Buss, for woman without man is a poor and melancholy creature, and four women are naturally four times worse, which all of the sex I know feels with the exception of Sarah Perkins who went to school with me, and who had a large nose with a wart on it, and always insisted she was sufficient to herself alone, which we all felt was due to the wart and changing her mind at thirty-nine because of a proposal received from a yeast peddler with two previous wives and later arrested for bigamy, which wasn't her fault,

poor thing, for she didn't know until it was too late——

MATILDA. (*Who has been yawning almost continuously*) Ma means—(*Yawningly*) I guess she don't mean anything!

MRS. SCROVINS. Exactly what I was telling them in plain words—and—(*Shakes the drooping MATILDA*) My goodness, are you going to sleep right on your feet? Come on into the store-room and help me count up them new supplies, for the more I count to-night the less I'll have to do in the morning, though I'm sure I don't know what folks think I'm made of——

MATILDA. Won't you come too, Lena? Countin' up always makes me sleepier than ever.

LENA. Maybe the school phonograph would keep you awake, Tildy. Anyhow we can try it. It's in the reception-room the other side of the building and we can cross over and have a tune or two before your mother gets through, I'm sure.

MATILDA. Oh, goody! Let's choose Over There and Doxology, 'cause I like them two tunes best. (*They start for door R. and exit as MRS. SCROVINS begins to talk*)

MRS. SCROVINS. (*To BERNICE and BUSS*) Now that's mighty kind of Miss Bergenfeld to try to keep Tildy awake, for she's just like her father who when he'd made up his mind to go to sleep was as unbudgable as the Sphinx, though why everybody should always be talking about the Sphinx thousands of miles away, when we've got plenty of home-made stone images doubtless just as good right here in the park is more than I—(*Exits door R. still talking*)

(*BUSS comes up to speak to BERNICE who promptly turns her back and elevates her chin.*)

BUSS. Mad?

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BERNICE. I'm more than mad. I—I—oh, I just can't find words to tell you what I think of you.

BUSS. Try! Spit it out. You'll feel better afterwards.

BERNICE. Of course you just hung on to that wagon on purpose to exasperate me.

BUSS. I didn't. I did it on purpose to take care of you.

BERNICE. But I don't want to be taken care of! Can't you understand that you've just spoiled the whole purpose of my ride? I set out to prove a principle—the principle that a young woman is perfectly competent to take care of herself, without having a man eternally tagging along to protect her. And now I've proven nothing. Even if you didn't protect, and weren't a particle of use, the truth remains that you were there in case of need. When anyone asks if we drove in alone, we've got to admit that Blunderbuss was with us. And of course that spoils all the effect.

BUSS. (*With intense gloom*) I suppose so.

BERNICE. Why don't you ever think to change your tactics, Blunderbuss? I should think you would when you're always after me and always getting squelched for it afterwards. I should think it would get to be monotonous.

BUSS. It does. Particularly the getting squelched. Look here, Bernice, ever since I was knee-high to a hop-toad I've been trailing around after you, being respectful, being kind, ready to lie down and let you walk all over me if you wanted to, and what have I got for it? Nothing but "Poor old Blunderbuss, you're always making mistakes!" and then that little contemptuous laugh of yours. It was the laugh, I guess, that got my goat.

BERNICE. Are you actually daring to criticise me, Stephen Buss?

BUSS. No, I'm just taking your hint and changing my tactics. You've pitched into me same as usual, but I'm not going to submit to it same as usual.

BERNICE. Indeed, and what are you going to do?

BUSS. Keep on talking in that toploftical tone and you'll find out.

BERNICE. I suppose you mean you're going to cut my acquaintance. You'd be able to hold out on that for about two days. Well, even for that long it would be a blessed relief not to have you dangling around. And if you wanted to go off with some of the other girls, you couldn't please me better. Thank goodness, there's not a man I know who can make my heart beat one bit faster, and if I ever fall in love, which I don't intend to let happen for years and years, it won't be with an awkward boy with big feet who—(*Suddenly seizes her in his arms*) Blunderbuss, what are you doing?

BUSS. Holding you tight in my arms.

BERNICE. Let me go this instant!

BUSS. Not until I've taken a kiss for every one of your scornful speeches you've made to-night! (*He kisses her*)

BERNICE. I thought you were a gentleman. (*He kisses her again in spite of her struggles*)

BUSS. So did I—(*Kisses her again*) until to-night. But I've decided that this gentleman varnish is only one layer deep after all. (*Kisses her again, then she breaks away*)

BERNICE. You're a brute!

BUSS. You can say what you want to now—I've made you pay.

BERNICE. I'll never forgive you as long as I live.

BUSS. I'll never ask you to.

BERNICE. I'll just hate you.

BUSS. I expect that, but you'll have to stop laughing at me, for by George when I'm in the trenches

over there in France, you'll have to remember that I held you in my arms and kissed you in spite of yourself.

BERNICE. What do you mean by "trenches" and "France" and all that talk? You—you haven't enlisted?

BUSS. Sure, yesterday. Passed physical exams, too, and Dad gave his consent, so I got in even if I am under age.

BERNICE. Why, Stephen Buss, why didn't you tell me of this before?

BUSS. I meant to this afternoon. Fact is I brought that ice-cream to sort of celebrate the event, but things didn't turn out the way I expected.

BERNICE. (*With emotion*) Your going to war seems to change everything. I—I do forgive you, Buss, kisses and all, since it's going to be good-bye forever.

BUSS. Don't misunderstand me. I didn't take those kisses in order to put over any of that good-bye forever business.

BERNICE. You're awfully dense. What I meant was that if—if you're going over there to fight for our country and want me to promise anything before you start——

BUSS. Eh?

BERNICE. It may seem awfully sudden, but when I think of your marching off to battle and the band playing, something just chokes me. I never realized before——

BUSS. You think you're in love with me, do you?

BERNICE. Why, yes, I guess I must be!

BUSS. (*After a slight pause*) I'm an odd sort of chap, I suppose. An hour ago if anyone had told me you'd ever own up to as much as that, Old Mahomet and his Seventh Heaven of delight wouldn't have had anything on me. You see I've

tumbled hard to the fact that it isn't love for Steve Buss that's got you, it's the lure of the U. S. uniform. Fact is—a lot of this farewell to the brave soldier-boy and “you're the only man I can ever love” isn't the real thing at all—it's just a poor imitation. It might answer for a while, but some of these days the war will be over, and the boys who come back will get into their every-day clothes again, and then what would I seem like to you but the same plain old Blunderbuss with big feet you've always made fun of?

BERNICE. But I'd stick to you as long as I'd promised to.

BUSS. Who in thunder wants a girl to stick to him just because she's promised to? What I want is a girl whose heart is glued so close she couldn't break away if she tried—a girl that doesn't care whether I have big feet or not—that don't care whether I'm in a soldier's uniform or farmer's overalls. No, no, you can't fool me, kid. Nothing doing! I want real love or none. (*Starts toward door c.*)

BERNICE. Where are you going?

BUSS. (*From door c.*) To unhitch that calico horse and take him around to the livery-stable. (*Exits c. and off l.*)

BERNICE. (*Calls after him*) Blunderbuss! Buss! Stephen!

(*Enter LENA r.*)

BERNICE. Lena, he's gone—actually gone without even saying good-night!

LENA. You've been quarreling with Blunderbuss again?

BERNICE. No, not exactly quarreling, but oh, Lena! Do you mind if I don't wait with you any longer? If I just go home alone, I mean—that is with Buss and the calico horse?

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LENA. Why, of course not! I just came in to tell you not to wait any longer.

BERNICE. Then I guess I won't, for I've something important to settle, and I'll never have another happy moment until it's settled right. Buss thinks he understands me, but he doesn't. I didn't understand myself until about five minutes ago, either. But now I do, and it's wonderful! Good-night, Lena. I just can't risk letting him get away! (*Rushes out c. and off L.*)

(MATILDA *enters at L. stretching and yawning.*)

MATILDA. I liked Doxology, but it's an awful sleepy tune. Anyhow, Ma's comin' in a minute.

MICHAEL. (*Enters c. from R.*) It's getting that late even the man in the moon's beginning to sink low in a blanket of clouds for a nap! Maybe your father didn't understand he was to call and get you, Miss Bergenfeld.

LENA. Yes, I'm sure he did! I don't know what can be keeping him.

MATILDA. (*Yawning and half crying*) I want to go home!

MICHAEL. Of course it ain't your fault, but a man that works as hard as I do must have his sleep, and I was thinkin'—would you mind locking up here yourself and slipping the key under my door when you go out?

LENA. Of course not. That's the idea exactly! I don't know why I didn't think of suggesting it myself. (*Enter MRS. SCROVINS R.*) Just let me have the key, and there's no reason why everybody shouldn't go.

MICHAEL. (*As he gives her a key off key-ring*) Glad you ain't afraid like some women-folks to stay by yourself. (*He crosses to door R. and locks it*)

LENA. It isn't as if you didn't live right here in the building. Mrs. Scrovins, you'll go now too, won't you? I'd really rather stay by myself.

MICHAEL. (*As he exits c.*) Good-night.

OMNES. Good-night.

MRS. SCROVINS. Then I believe I will go, Miss Bergenfeld. I confess I got so drowsy in there I didn't know a roll of bandage from a whisk-broom, and Tildy's eyes are squintin' fit to kill, por thing! takin' that trait from both sides of the house, I often dropping into a doze when he was courting me, which is *most* unusual, though I once had a cousin who went to sleep and forgot to appear at her own marriage ceremony, and he married her sister instead just out of school, thereby causing her to live an old maid all the rest of her life, but she felt herself justified, for as she told her husband——

MATILDA. Ma means 'twa'n't the old maid that told her husband, 'twas the one that got him.

MRS. SCROVINS. Which is my identical words in plain English, and, Tildy, you might let me finish a sentence once in my life, which anybody knows I never get a chance to do with you around, and not being a natural talker——.

MATILDA. Come on, Ma! Don't get to goin' again. I'm so sleepy I just can't stand it. (*Drags Mrs. Scrovins toward door c.*) Good-night, Lena.

LENA. Good-night, Tildy. Good-night, Mrs. Scrovins.

MRS. SCROVINS. Good-night, and for goodness sakes, Tildy, don't forget where you are and fall full length headlong down the stairs, (*exits with Matilda c. and off L.*) for I own up I'm not in full possession of my senses, and if you should once start falling—(*Becomes inaudible*)

(LENA, left alone, looks from window. Begins to

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pace the floor. The 'phone rings, and, hearing it, she gives a slight shriek.)

LENA. (*Hastily takes up 'phone*) Yes—yes—this is Miss Bergenfeld—I'm still here waiting for Father. Who is this speaking? (*Pause*) Oh, the nightwatchman in Father's building? Well, what is it? (*Pause*) But there must be some mistake. She must mean another family of that name. But she can't be my sister, for Father and I have no relatives in this country—none at all. What? She's started out to overtake Father? Well, thank you for telling me, but she must be crazy—that's all. (*Pause*) Yes, John, of course I realize you did the best you know. (*Hangs up receiver*)

BERGENFELD. (*Appears in door rather breathless and fanning himself with his slouch hat*) Well, daughter?

LENA. (*Starts toward him*) Father, I'm so glad you've come! I was growing uneasy about you, and besides I've just had the strangest 'phone from your night-watchman.

BERGENFELD. What?

LENA. He says a woman who claimed to be my sister came along inquiring for you—said she was just off the train, so he told her she might possibly overtake you as you'd started to come here after me.

BERGENFELD. Your sister? Bah! What foolishness! John, he likes too much the drink on his lonely rounds. Your sister! It is all in his head. (*Snaps fingers*) We dismiss it—like that. But I wish that your faithful sister in Alsace could indeed be here long enough to act as an example for you. Why have you come this night to see me, to take my mind from the important plans I am forming—each as by an inspiration! Is it that your coward

heart trembles for the result of the little help you gave us? Yes? It is not so?

LENA. Yes, Father, I confess I have been fairly terror-stricken ever since Walters left the camp this afternoon. I—I got to thinking, and somehow I—I didn't trust Walters nor his word of honor at all—I couldn't. I said to myself—if he finds when he gets into that factory that there's no chance of getting those photographs after all—is he going to let it go at that? What is there he wouldn't do for money? I just got wild, and begged Bernice Olcott to drive me in on another pretense. And when I got here and heard a tire explode in the street a while ago—I—I——

BERGENFELD. Ah, so your mind went even as far as that, eh? Well, it seems you imagine much, my Lena. (*Points off through window at L.*) See, the lights of the factory are still burning, and I hope by this time Walters has what he went for. (*Turns to LENA*) Foolish child!

LENA. Perhaps my nerves were a little overstrained, but outside of that—(*Hesitates, then gathers courage to proceed*) Oh, Father, does no doubt of the righteousness of the German cause ever trouble you?

BERGENFELD. Never! I was born a German, and it is the secret of the German strength that we remain true to our training. Love of Germany! Belief in Germany! It is a habit that has worn deep channels in my brain and heart.

LENA. But suppose some day something happened to shock you out of that channel?

BERGENFELD. That could come only through a soul-wrenching catastrophe, a cataclysm too great for the mind to grasp. It will not come. It could not be. But you—(*Coldly*) at a breath of the wind you change. It is the weak, vacillating American blood in you that speaks—your mother's blood.

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LENA. You loved my mother?

BERGENFELD. I loved her, yes, but she had for herself only a small share of my heart. She was a woman, and women are the inferior sex—so in Germany we have always believed. That is why we exalt our men. Yes, I loved your mother as I love my daughters, my jewelry-store, my books, but not with my soul as I love my country, and as I love my grandson Rudolph, in whom my old blood flows young again.

LENA. And yet Rudolph is only a baby three years old. You hardly know him.

BERGENFELD. Not a baby—a man-child! Such as he are the hope of our future. Germany must and shall be the victor for the sake of the German men-children. But come, why do we stay here to talk about these things?

(Without warning, WALTERS, bearded heavily, and in the garb of a workman, makes a swift and stealthy entrance at c.)

LENA. *(Frightened)* Mercy! Who are you? What do you want?

WALTERS. *(Snatches off long beard)* It is I—Walters.

BERGENFELD. What ails you? Are you being followed?

WALTERS. I don't know. There seemed to be strange shapes trying to catch up with me, so I ran on and on, blindly, like a dog. When I came to myself I saw the Academy black against the moon—and as I crouched in the shadow of the gates—you passed—so near I could have reached out and touched you. I—I had to see you, so—when the coast seemed clear—I followed you in. *(Gives a start and looks behind him)* What's that? Are you sure we're alone here?

BERGENFELD. Yes. Pull yourself together. Be

a man. This is not wise, your coming here. You should have waited till the proper time. Well, what news? You failed? They questioned you and you ran away?

WALTERS. I wasn't questioned—I wasn't even suspected. I got inside on the pass without any trouble at all, and hid until the workmen had gone, and then—and then—(*Seems about to lose his nerve again*)

BERGENFELD. The photographs! You got them?

WALTERS. No, no chance in the world. I was afraid there wouldn't be—I told you that, and so—I—I had to do the other.

BERGENFELD. You succeeded?

WALTERS. Yes. Placed it just inside the door of the finishing room——

LENA. Placed what?

BERGENFELD. Ah, so you did have the courage! That means for you a rich reward.

LENA. Placed what, I say?

WALTERS. A bomb—timed for midnight. If nothing happens—it will blow the place to atoms!

LENA. No, no! Why, you gave me your promise on your word of honor——

BERGENFELD. Silence! He did but follow my instructions if the worst came to the worst.

LENA. But you yourself promised there'd be no bombs—no violence——

BERGENFELD. Always supposing there were no complications. It had to be done for the sake of Germany—the fortunes of war! Before the machinery can be reconstructed, Germany's submarines may have won the great victory. You should rejoice.

WALTERS. Hah! I thought someone was right at my shoulder! I—I'm all to pieces.

BERGENFELD. Why do you keep on shaking as with a chill? No lives will be lost.

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WALTERS. But that's just it. I haven't told you the worst.

LENA. The worst? What do you mean by that?

WALTERS. (*To BERGENFELD*) You told me the factory would be empty. I thought myself it was empty. But—after the job was done—I heard voices in the office—I recognized them—Olcutt and his son working there.

LENA. But you went back? You saw that the bomb was removed?

WALTERS. I—I couldn't. My nerve had given out. All I thought of was to make my getaway.

LENA. You don't mean to say you left Frank and his father there—in danger of death?

WALTERS. They're not the only ones in danger. Let this once be found out on me, and I'll be convicted of murder. The fact that I thought the place was empty would have no weight at all. (*Looks off through window at L.*) Gad! if the lights would only wink out in that corner room, I'd know they'd gone!

LENA. And no one to tell them of their danger! Oh! (*Starts toward door c.*)

BERGENFELD. (*Intercepts her*) Stop! Where are you going?

LENA. To warn them. I'll run all the way—there should yet be time.

BERGENFELD. You would betray us all? Betray Germany? (*Draws her back into room*)

LENA. Let me go—let me go! They shall not die—I say they shall not.

BERGENFELD. Stop that screaming. (*To WALTERS*) Shut that door. (*WALTERS obeys*)

LENA. Oh, Father, you must not let this go on! Why, I love Frank Olcutt, love him with all my heart and soul—and you—you ask me to let him meet a horrible death—to stand by and permit it! Let me go, Father—just to say a word of

warning—I'll not betray you, nor anyone—I'll swear to that. Think of your love for my mother, for my sister, for little Rudolph—of all the loves in the world rolled into one and you can't equal the love I have for that boy in the shadow of death. Let me save him—let me at least try! Don't you see—I—I helped you to this—and you're making me—me—guilty of his murder!

BERGENFELD. The less must be sacrificed to the greater. There is but one thing to remember—if the maker of the torpedo dies—there will be no more built to ruin us.

LENA. You would allow this? But you shall not. (*Runs to phone. Takes up receiver*) Central! Central!

WALTERS. (*Springs and takes the phone from her hands*) None of that.

BERGENFELD. (*To LENA*) You have gone insane? Very well! Then we shall restrain you. (*Points to hoisting rope attached to big flag against the wall*) That rope there—cut a length of it.

WALTERS. (*Obeys with alacrity*) You're going to bind her?

BERGENFELD. Until it is over. Later she will be glad she was not allowed to turn traitor to her father and the cause. Left alone—she will have time to think.

LENA. Don't, Father! Have mercy! Oh, Frank! Frank! (*They tie her in a chair and place a handkerchief about her mouth. She makes an attempt to speak. For a moment her father loosens the handkerchief*)

BERGENFELD. What is it you would say?

LENA. Air! Air! Near the window!

BERGENFELD. It shall be as you say. I make you no more uncomfortable than I must. I would not be unkind, but firm. A father's daughter must obey. (*To WALTERS*) Help me lift the chair—no

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noise! (*They place the chair near the window. BERGENFELD tightens the handkerchief about LENA's mouth again*) We go now, since we must protect ourselves. Later, after midnight, I will come and release you.

WALTERS. (*As BERGENFELD starts toward door c.*) Wait! Let me get the start of you. You were right—we should not be seen together until it is safe.

BERGENFELD. And still you tremble—you whimper.

WALTERS. Because I know if they found out—suspected me, even—I'd be mobbed—strung up to the nearest lamp-post.

BERGENFELD. Think instead of the gold you will get—the gold you Americans worship!

WALTERS. A man can risk too much, even for gold. (*Stealthily exits at c.*)

(*LENA moans and moves her head.*)

BERGENFELD. You, I pity you—but it is only that you have such a fainting heart. And what if two men die? It is to the end that thousands of our brave soldiers shall not meet destruction on the sea—and shall be spared to the service of Germany. We Germans are always kind, except when it is necessary to be cruel. Then the deed is glorified because it is for the good of the Fatherland! (*Exits at c.*)

(*The moment the door is closed LENA begins slowly shoving her chair, as best she may, toward the line of electric buttons on the wall. Finally she is near enough to move her head back and strike against them. Instantly the lights go out and bright moonlight reveals her as she still continues to press against the buttons.*)

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MICHAEL. (*Heard in distance*) I'm coming—coming—fast as I can make it wid me game leg! (*Opens door*) Who's here? Who sounded the fire-alarm? In heaven's name—(*Crosses to the line of buttons and snaps on lights*) Miss Bergenfeld! Who's done the likes of this? Speak, can't you? Was it burglars?

LENA. (*After handkerchief is removed*) Two men—but they've gone now.

MICHAEL. What did they look like?

LENA. I—I—it all happened so quickly—and I was frightened—oh, don't wait to untie those ropes—cut them and set me free!

MICHAEL. As fast as I can, Miss—I haven't my knife wid me. There you are!

(LENA *springs up.*)

LENA. I must get to that 'phone—give the alarm!

MICHAEL. Right you are, and I'll follow them up. They can't have got very far. (*Runs out at c. and off L.*)

LENA. (*At 'phone*) Central! Central! (*Pause*) Why don't they answer? Oh, God help me to be in time! Central, give me the Olcott Manufacturing Company. I don't know the number, but it's a matter of life and death. (*Pause*) Dear God, help me! (*Pause*) Hulloo! Mr. Olcott? This is a friend speaking. You're in great danger—a bomb has been placed inside the door of the finishing room—it's timed to wreck the building at midnight. Disregard this warning at your peril. You believe me? You'll investigate at once? Thank heaven! (*BERGENFELD now advances into the room, having made his appearance at c. too late to prevent message going through*) Father!

BERGENFELD. So, you outwitted us! I heard the sound of bells below and did not suspect the

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signal came from you until the janitor rushed past my hiding place.

LENA. Father, don't look at me like that—I had to do it!

BERGENFELD. So, you warned them—defeated a great purpose—took sides with the enemies of the Fatherland! You have been false to your sacred vow—a vow given in this very room. Do you remember that vow?

LENA. Yes.

BERGENFELD. And the penalty for breaking that vow—you remember that, also?

LENA. But Father—I could not see the man I loved slaughtered without a chance to save himself!

BERGENFELD. Enough! (*Produces roll of bills and a small box from his pocket*) There is money. Take it and go to another city. Buy new clothing. Destroy what you are wearing. Leave nothing to show who you are—that you were ever Otto Bergenfeld's daughter. You will find in the little box what is enough, and it is painless. Do you understand me?

LENA. Yes, I understand, and I will carry out your commands exactly as you give them. After all—my little life doesn't matter—nothing matters—if only I have saved him! I—you'll say good-bye to me, Father?

BERGENFELD. A traitor to Germany can no longer be a daughter of mine.

LENA. But when we're parting forever, Father, can't you spare me one kind word—it would make it a little easier for me? (*Pause. He is unyielding*) But if you cannot, I know you only do what you think is right. I know that I too did what I thought was right. (*Prepares to go*)

GRETCHEN. (*Heard outside*) Father! Father!

BERGENFELD. That voice—that calls "father!"

(*Enter GRETCHEN at door c.*) Gretchen! My daughter Gretchen! So, you *did* come to me, and there was no mistake after all!

GRETCHEN. (*Pantingly*) Oh, Father, I thought I would never reach you! I lost my way—I've been wandering about the streets but at last——

BERGENFELD. At last you are here; all the way from far Alsace to bring word to your father of the Germans and what great things they are doing!

GRETCHEN. Yes, I have come all the way to tell you of the Germans.

BERGENFELD. You are just in time to comfort me—bind up my broken heart.

GRETCHEN. Ah, no! I have come for comfort, because my own heart is broken! (*Turns to LENA*) And this—this is my little sister——

BERGENFELD. (*To LENA, as she is about to rush into GRETCHEN'S arms*) Stand back! (*To GRETCHEN*) Lena—is no longer a daughter of mine, nor sister of yours. She has proved a traitor to our beloved Fatherland.

GRETCHEN. (*Wildly*) A traitor to our beloved Fatherland? Ha, Ha, ha! That is what they called *him*—"traitor!"

BERGENFELD. What? You are laughing? Yet with a face so sad? My daughter—your black dress—what does it mean? Now that I look at you closely—your face—why, it is older by years than it should be! How came you here alone? Where is Hans, your husband? Where is my little grandson—Rudolph?

GRETCHEN. (*To LENA*) A traitor to our beloved Germany are you, sister mine? Ha, ha, ha! A curse on Germany!

BERGENFELD. A curse on Germany, you say? Ah! Have you then gone mad?

GRETCHEN. No, I am not mad—it is you—you who have not your senses—you who are hood-

winked, blinded, like others of my country. At the risk of my life I escaped from Alsace into Switzerland! Thence to Italy and across the sea to America that I might tell you so. Listen! Always we in Alsace-Lorraine, French and Germans together, were each proud in our own hearts of the land from which we had sprung—were each eager for that land to be the dominating one. So, when the war came, and the German troops swarmed through Alsace—"They will be kind to us," I said to my French-Alsatian neighbors. "You will see what Germany is!" And my husband—my Hans—though his father was of French blood, remembering his mother was German, did not murmur when they drove him to fight against France, and though his heart was torn because too he loved his father's people—he fought bravely. But—as you know—he was never strong, and one day when the order came to charge against the French—he could not obey—he stumbled and fell! Then—then—someone remembered that his father had been French! Immediately they accused him of sympathizing with the enemy—of shirking—of pretending to be sick to keep from fighting against them. So they got him on his feet and at the point of the bayonet—forced him to go on—but not for far. He fell again. They then brought him into the village—and for an example to his neighbors who might also remember that French blood ran in their veins, they tortured him—yes, calling him "dog" and "Frenchman", they tortured him before my eyes, and shot him to death. My God—I can never shut that vision from my eyes!

BERGENFELD. A terrible mistake, my daughter! It shakes me to the soul—but—we Germans are not fiends! Mistakes must occur in such serious business as war.

GRETCHEN. Mistake? You call it a mistake?

You try to make an excuse for them? Well, then, shall I tell you that because I cried out against their cruelty—tried to defend my husband—they put me to torture, too! I shall never tell what I suffered—no, the secret of that horror will be locked in my own heart forever—and even if I told it—how much would it count with you? In your eyes I am a woman, only a woman!

BERGENFELD. Think not that I condone too much! A good German looks after his women because they are weak—and though you have suffered—because in the red haze of war even a good soldier sometimes strikes where he should not—I am glad and give thanks that there is still little Rudolph to comfort you and make you forget. They may have wronged your husband and you—but remember, the German nation continues its life in the German child, and the German heart is ever tender to children.

GRETCHEN. Then why have they taken him away from me?

BERGENFELD. I see! Still afraid of French influence, they have taken him to Germany. Yes, I can understand how they might be suspicious of French influence in Alsace-Lorraine. But, my daughter, they will rear him carefully, kindly, and give him back to you after the war. I will have earned by that time the right to demand it, and I will see that they give him back.

GRETCHEN. They have given him back to me already.

BERGENFELD. He is with you, then—my little grandson—he, the heart of my heart?—take me to him.

GRETCHEN. They gave him back to me a bleeding, mutilated thing, dying in agony. “He is French and accursed,” they said—and tortured him; and when he raised his hands, his little childish hands,

to beg for mercy—they cut them off—before my eyes!

BERGENFELD. It is a lie—a fiendish lie! You shall not rave any more in your madness!

GRETCHEN. A Prussian officer stood there and smiled as they gave him back to my arms—my baby—my baby—who called out for you at the last. “Don’t tell Grandpa,” he said, “it will make him cry,” and then—he died—his blood ran into my heart.

BERGENFELD. This is a nightmare—a dream of terror—but I will awake—yes, I will awake.

GRETCHEN. Awake! Yes, awake, my father! Know that in every hamlet, almost in every household an invading German enters, you will find old people have been tortured, women shamed, little ones mutilated! The Prussians have stopped at nothing in their lust for power! Germany, until cleansed and purified by fire, must remain the dishonored among nations. What I have told you is only a part of the truth, the whole truth can never be told. (*Points to flag against the wall*) No one will ever know how that flag looks to me now nor what it means—but that is why I have come to live out the rest of my broken life in the Land of the Free!

LENA. Dear, dear sister!—and now I must tell you good-bye.

GRETCHEN. Lena, child—where are you going?

LENA. To fulfill a promise I made in this room—a vow that must be kept. Don’t think hard of me, Gretchen—I’d like to stay and comfort you.

BERGENFELD. That vow, Lena! Wait! Repeat it as you said it then.

LENA. “I do solemnly pledge my loyalty to the flag of my father, and if ever I am false to that pledge, I solemnly promise to destroy myself with my own hand.”

BERGENFELD. Stay. You—need—not—go.

LENA. Father, I made that vow as to my own soul. You yourself have told me that right or wrong, a vow must be kept.

BERGENFELD. Your vow—it shall be kept. The flag of your mother—that was the thing for which I asked your loyalty. They tortured little Rudolph—they cut off his hands——

GRETCHEN and LENA. (*Breathlessly*) Father!

BERGENFELD. Germany that I have worshipped—I turn from you—I tear you from my heart! Henceforth for my children and me there is but one country—one flag: America and her stars and stripes!

Curtain.

ACT IV

TIME: *Early the next morning.*

SCENE. *Red Cross Headquarters as in ACT III.*

DISCOVERED: *Alberta, Betty, Laura and Vivian crouped informally. They all wear sport clothes and at rise of curtain are seen to be devouring crullers with real school-girl appetites.*

(*Confused chatter.*)

OMNES. (*Confused chatter*) “Never tasted anything so good as those crullers in my life.”
 “After a five-mile walk, anything tastes good.”
 “Was it only five? I thought it was a hundred.”
 (*Continued ad lib*)

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VIVIAN. I'll take another, Birdie.

ALBERTA. (*Exhibits empty bag*) Nothing left.

VIVIAN. Why, that bag was half full, Alberta! You don't mean you've gone and devoured all those fattening crullers yourself?

ALBERTA. There were only six left over, and a fat person requires more for her system than a thin one.

LAURA. And I had only one! Well, talk about nerve, Birdie, yours is certainly corpulent.

BETTY. I was just looking forward to a second one myself.

ALBERTA. Then why didn't you say so? You talked and talked, and didn't seem to be enjoying them at all. I was the only one giving my attention solely to crullers.

BERNICE. (*Walks in breezily at c.*) Hello, girls!

BETTY. Welcome to our crullerless party! Birdie, give her a piece of the bag if you haven't eaten it yourself by this time.

ALBERTA. I think you've harped on that joke long enough.

BERNICE. Why, I never dreamed of your all getting in as early as this until Betty 'phoned me!

LAURA. We decided not to wait for the ten-two. Instead we got on the caboose of a milk-train and rode five miles.

ALBERTA. And walked the other five. I'm nearly dead.

BETTY. Just for a lark we arose at four A. M.

ALBERTA. With only one cup of coffee to sustain us.

VIVIAN. And oh, the world was perfectly glorious so early in the morning. Dew on the grass, and the birds tuning up, and the air just so ravishingly heavenly I thought I'd expire!

LAURA. We had to wake up a grocery store to get crullers when we arrived, and coming out we

ran into Blunderbuss. He got us this hot pitcher of coffee from his boarding-house and brought it over. (*Indicates pitcher on table*) Really, there is something quite likable about Blunderbuss.

BERNICE. Oh, indeed, do you think so?

LAURA. But we all wished you'd been there when he caught his foot in the rug and went sprawling. She'd have died laughing, wouldn't she, girls?

BERNICE. (*Freely*) Indeed? At what, may I ask?

BETTY. Why, at Blunderbuss sprawling on the floor! He was funnier than Walters and the pig. (*Girls laugh*)

BERNICE. (*Loftily*) Well, it seems to me that when Mr. Buss was kind enough to put himself out and get the coffee for you, it is quite impolite, to say the least, to laugh at him. Anybody might catch his foot in a rug.

ALBERTA. Why, Bernice, what on earth has struck you? You know very well that Buss's big feet——

BERNICE. (*Interrupts*) His feet are not a bit bigger than those of Christopher Columbus. I compared them mentally as I came through the Park this morning.

VIVIAN. But, Bernice, you've always made fun of his feet yourself!

BERNICE. Perhaps I did, in the very distant past. But everything seems different now that Stephen has enlisted.

LAURA. Buss enlisted as well as Frank Olcutt? There won't be a soul left for dancing parties next winter!

VIVIAN. But at least we can write to the dear boys. To keep up a regular correspondence with a hero in the trenches seems to me quite too romantic for words!

BERNICE. Of course you may write to Brother

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Frank if you like, Vivian, but so long as Stephen Buss and I have become engaged——

OMNES. Engaged?

BERNICE. Of course. That's what I've been trying to make you understand ever since I came in.

BETTY. When did it happen, dear?

VIVIAN. And for mercy sakes—how? On one knee or in a whisper?

BERNICE. Girls, it's marvellous to be engaged! I don't know that I look much older since it happened, but I'm no more the same girl I was yesterday when I started to drive that calico horse, than a two year old child is like—is like Methusaleh,—I've developed so. And let me tell you this. You may think you're acquainted with a man, but you've no idea of his real character until you find yourself engaged to him. Why, Stephen Buss is simply noble, and his command of language—Well, last night he sounded exactly like some of President Wilson's speeches. Of course we won't be married until he comes back from over there, but then we'll have a real war wedding!

VIVIAN. Engaged! Girls, did you ever imagine anything so wonderful could happen to anyone right in our own class?

BETTY. One engagement makes more, they say.

LAURA. I shouldn't be surprised if we all had chances before the year was out.

ALBERTA. Maybe after the thin ones all step off, the fat ones will have a show. (*Shakes a few remaining crumbs from bag and eats them*)

LAURA. I think we ought to give them an engagement party right this week.

ALBERTA. So did I! I guess even Mr. Hoover couldn't object to a few sweets for that!

BERNICE. Oh, girls, you make me so happy! Because an engagement is really a matter of great

importance in a girl's life and should be treated that way. I wonder what Lena will say when she hears it!

VIVIAN. Oh, speaking of Lena just reminds us! Poor Michael is on one of those awful semi-annual sprees of his this morning, and what do you think he imagines?

(Girls giggle appreciatively, remembering.)

BERNICE. I don't know—what?

LAURA. Why, that burglars broke in here last night, and that Lena Bergenfeld was here, and that they would have kidnapped her and run off with the Red Cross supplies if he hadn't chased them away.

BERNICE. What a perfectly ridiculous idea! And he was perfectly sober last night when Lena and the rest of us dropped in here. We'll all have to work for no-license in this town just to save poor Michael from himself.

LAURA. What does your brother say about your engagement, Bernice?

BERNICE. Hardly anything, so far. He and Papa were so mysterious at breakfast it was positively uncanny. Something went wrong at the factory last night I am sure, for they spoke about going to meet a secret service man who was coming on the train, and all that sort of thing. My poor little engagement got sandwiched in between and was hardly noticed! Oh! *(As young OLCUTT enters at c.)* Why, here's Frank now! *(Chorus of greetings from girls)*

OLCUTT. Good morning, everybody! This is some surprise! It's so early, I thought I'd find the rooms practically deserted.

BETTY. We just took a break to get up a day-break party from camp.

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LAURA. We had to be here for a meeting of the Red Cross this afternoon anyhow, and we walked all the way from Cross Roads Junction.

BERNICE. It seems to me you look even worse than you did at breakfast, Frank, and I just know you aren't feeling well.

OLCUTT. Nonsense, I'm perfectly well.

VIVIAN. I think there's something awfully fascinating about looking pale! The only trouble is that when *I'm* pale, the color all rushes to my nose and spoils everything.

OLCUTT. Bernice, all these Red Cross workers must need some refreshment after their early morning walk. Here—(*Hands her some change*) take them down to the ice-cream parlors. They've just opened. Peach Melbas all round.

BERNICE. You darling!

VIVIAN. Peach Melbas? How esthetically salubrious!

ALBERTA. They're fattening, but I won't spoil the party by backing out.

BERNICE. Please run on, girls, and I'll catch up with you. I want to speak to Frank just a minute.

(BETTY, ALBERTA and VIVIAN exit c. and off L.)

LAURA. (*Coquettishly from doorway*) I don't see why Mr. Olcutt can't come along, too! (*Exits c. and after other girls*)

BERNICE. (*Very confidentially*) If you want to let me know what the trouble at the factory was now, Frank, remember it will be perfectly safe. I'm not a child any longer. I'm an engaged woman.

OLCUTT. Run along, kid! Keep those girls out of the way as long as you can, that's all. I've phoned Lena to meet me here and I want to talk with her undisturbed.

BERNICE. Oh, Frank! Can it be that the example of me and Buss——?

OLCUTT. Cut that, Sis. Nothing doing.

BERNICE. (*Still playfully suspicious*) Well, anyhow, I'd feed the girls two Melbas apiece before I let them get away. (*Enter LENA c.*) Oh, hulloa, Lena! (*Gives her a quick hug*) The girls are waiting for me so I can't stay a minute! (*BERNICE exits c. and off L.*)

LENA. I hope I've not kept you waiting. I got away just as soon as I could.

OLCUTT. I thank you for coming. I—(*Hesitates*)

LENA. I hardly expected to see you again before you went to the training camp. And why did you wish to talk with me here rather than at my home?

OLCUTT. I'll explain that presently. The truth is, Lena, I—How can I say it?

LENA. Say what?

OLCUTT. Yesterday I asked you to think of me as a friend, always a friend, but now——

LENA. Well?

OLCUTT. Lena, something terrible has happened, and I must ask you to think of me as an enemy instead—a man who must do his duty as he sees it even if it means running rough-shod over the hearts of those he holds dearest in all the world.

LENA. Something terrible has happened, you say?

OLCUTT. Yes. Last night there was an attempt made to blow up my father's factory. The attempt would have succeeded if my father had not been warned just in time over the telephone: a voice he did not recognize.

LENA. But what has that to do with me? You don't suspect me of——?

OLCUTT. No, Lena, a thousand times, no! You had no knowledge of such a plot, of course.

LENA. Was any harm done to the factory?

OLCUTT. Not a dollar's worth, thank heaven! We stamped out the fuse and that ended it.

LENA. But you said I must think of you as an enemy. Why?

OLCUTT. Oh, I can't meet your eyes when you look at me like that—as if I should shield rather than hurt you—but you must know this now if you haven't known it before: your father is a traitor to the United States Government.

LENA. No, no! He is not a traitor to the United States Government. Upon my word of honor you are mistaken. My father, whatever may have been his convictions in the past, is to-day as true and loyal as you yourself and will remain so.

OLCUTT. It is only natural that you should believe in him, his own daughter. But I want to prepare you for what is coming.

LENA. Oh, what do you mean by that? You—you frighten me!

OLCUTT. An hour from now your father will be in custody as an active alien enemy to the United States.

LENA. Ah, no!

OLCUTT. Yes.

LENA. Some one has accused him?

OLCUTT. The detectives. They had no clue to begin upon when they came, but naturally they thought of a German first of all and asked us if we had noticed anyone acting suspiciously. My father said "no". I said—(*Pauses chokingly*)

LENA. Don't tell me it was *you*!

OLCUTT. I had to put my personal feelings out of it and remember only that I was a soldier. It wasn't simply that a man had plotted to demolish my father's property, it was that an enemy was plotting against my government—plotting to prolong the war. I thought of the war-weary people over

there—of the brave French who were fighting and depending on our help—of the crimes of the submarine——

LENA. But my father—what did you tell them about him?

OLCUTT. I told them how four days ago as I came out of the factory late at night, I saw a man walking away from the building—a man that seemed anxious to avoid being seen by the watchman on his rounds, and that later when I trailed him from across the street and he passed under the glare of an arc-light—I saw it was your father. Lena, I had tried to put the matter out of my mind, had made a dozen excuses that it might have been just natural curiosity and all that—I *did* put it out of my mind—but when that happened last night it came back—his avoidance of the watchman, the lateness of the hour——

LENA. If you're going to fight against my father, I can fight too. You have no real proof against him.

OLCUTT. They don't wait for final proof in a moment like this in war times. They are arresting him on suspicion and will search for evidence afterwards. That's why I wanted you away from the house when it happened—to break the shock of it a little, if I could.

LENA. Then perhaps, even now, they are taking him away with them?

OLCUTT. I'm bitterly sorry for you, Lena.

LENA. Sorry? Then why couldn't you have waited a few short hours? Why couldn't you have given me that much warning of what was to come? It would have given me time to think what I might do to defend him, and made it easier for my poor sister!

OLCUTT. Your sister?

LENA. Yes, my sister who lived in Alsace-Lor-

raïne. She has come to us from across the sea—broken hearted, almost insane. Oh, if you could only see and talk with her! Can't you persuade them to put off taking him until to-morrow? You'll do that much for me, Frank, won't you? Father has been all for Germany in the past, I'll admit, but that's over now. He's changed. In future, he's eager to work only for America.

OLCUTT. (*With sad unbelief*) And when did this wonderful change in him take place?

LENA. Last night.

OLCUTT. I thought so. After the plan failed—a good time to repent.

LENA. It was my sister's story that changed him. She has suffered the loss of husband and child through German cruelty and fought for escape that she might come here and tell him the truth. Oh, but I see that you don't believe in his repentance!

OLCUTT. (*Gently*) I believe that you believe in it, Lena.

LENA. My poor father! How can we ever explain? Who will believe us or understand? Oh, why can't you at least give him a chance to prove that he is different?

OLCUTT. Because if a man tries to wreck a munitions plant and fails, he tries again. And if he once succeeds, it encourages him to repeat the experiment. He can't be regarded as an individual, but as a dangerous force working against the Commonwealth. I know you must hate me for this, but that was what I schooled myself to expect.

LENA. No, I don't hate you. Instead, I care for you very, very much.

OLCUTT. (*Amazed*) Lena!

LENA. Like my father, I have come from under the shadow of deceit. I deceived you yesterday when I let you think I had turned to some one

else instead of you. I couldn't let you know the truth while I still felt my Father was German at heart, but now—I want you to know that all the time it was you I cared for—only you. There need be no barrier between us now, unless—unless—(*Looks at him appealingly*)

OLCUTT. Unless I refuse to interfere in behalf of your father. That's it, isn't it?

LENA. Yes, that's it.

OLCUTT. (*With deep emotion*) I see now that a soldier's duty may mean something more than facing the enemy on the battlefield with the shells bursting thick about you. It means doing your best for your country even if you're called on to take your happiness by the throat and strangle it! A fellow's just got to take the right path at any cost.

LENA. But how can you be sure which path is right and which it wrong?

OLCUTT. A chap's just got to plug along by guess in that case, and that's what I propose to do.

LENA. So—knowing that this will come between us forever—you refuse to intercede for my father?

OLCUTT. Yes, Lena. That's what my soldier's duty seems to mean. (*The 'phone rings. OLCUTT springs to answer it*) Yes, Olcutt, Jr., at the 'phone. What's that? When? Thank you. Yes. (*Hangs up receiver. Addresses LENA*) After all, it is taken out of my hands or yours. I needn't have made my choice—it's decided without me.

LENA. Who spoke to you? What—did they say?

OLCUTT. That the secret service men have searched the rooms above your father's jewelry store and found he had been making bombs and hiding them there. They are now on their way to his home.

LENA. Before he could destroy the evidence of his guilt! Well, let me tell you now that if you

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had allowed him to go free, he would have been such a help to America; that what I did in 'phoning you that warning last night dwindles into nothing beside it!

OLCUTT. Lena! It was your voice that reached my father—you, who saved his life and mine? I never dreamed it was you!

LENA. If you had—what then?

OLCUTT. I hope I'd still have been soldier enough to do my duty just the same. (LENA starts away) Where are you going?

LENA. To my father—to walk with him a prisoner through the streets. He shall not suffer alone.

OLCUTT. No, Lena, I can't stand that!

LENA. You have done your soldier's duty as you saw it—I shall do a daughter's duty as I see it.

OLCUTT. Let me go with you—help you some way.

LENA. No, henceforth I shall walk alone! (*Exits c. and off L.*)

OLCUTT. "Alone!" Lena! (*Paces the floor, agitated over her plight*)

(BUSS makes characteristic entrance from c., stumbling over something and nearly falling.)

BUSS. Hello, Olcutt!

OLCUTT. (*Has dropped into a chair—answers dejectedly*) Hello, Buss!

BUSS. You seem sort of grouchy! Hope you are not put out because I got engaged to your sister.

OLCUTT. Why, no! I—I had forgotten it for a minute, that's all. Glad of it, old chap! Of course Bernice is a good deal of a kid!

BUSS. Not when you come to know her. Very mature for her age. We both are. Of course I didn't intend to bind her to any promise until after

I got back from the war ; but when a thing like that gets hold of you it sort of carries you away. By the way, Lena rushed past me just now and it set me to thinking that maybe you and she had come to an understanding, too.

OLCUTT. Well, we haven't, and never will. Drop it.

BUSS. Can't say that you act especially social to-day.

OLCUTT. Don't feel so. Things haven't gone well with me.

BUSS. Sorry. Is there anything I can do?

OLCUTT. No, perhaps what has happened is no worse than a soldier ought to expect. The whole world has changed for me in the last twenty-four hours, and I suppose from now on it's going to change still more. (*Moodily looks from window*)

BUSS. I say, Olcutt, what are you thinking of?

OLCUTT. I was thinking what that old army officer must have meant when he said: "A million boys are going over to fight for their country next year, and not one of them will ever come back."

BUSS. Stuff! The Germans can't get us all.

OLCUTT. He didn't mean that. When any of the boys come back, they'll come back *men*, their boyhood left behind them—lost somewhere on the grim battlefield. You see, you can't be whole-heartedly loyal to your country, you can't give up all your personal hopes and desires for the sake of Old Glory there, and keep on being a boy. I've had a taste of what loyalty means and the sacrifices it demands already, and *I know*. You'll find out in time, too, Buss. Every soldier must.

BERNICE. (*Rushes in at c.*) Oh, Frank! Frank! Mr. Bergenfeld—a mob tried to get at him, but Lena helped him away while a policeman held them back!

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BUSS. A mob? Great Scott! Where? (*Rushes off at c.*)

BERNICE. (*To OLCUTT*) Mr. Bergenfeld must have killed somebody, or done something awful from the way they acted—they hooted at him, threw sticks and stones——

OLCUTT. Where did Lena go? Where can I find them?

BERNICE. They're here—got in through the driveway. Lena was helping him up the stairs and——

(LENA and BERGENFELD appear just outside of c.)

BERGENFELD looks as if he had been roughly handled. His forehead is cut and bleeding.)

OLCUTT. Lena, are you hurt? (*Springs to her side*)

LENA. It doesn't matter about me, but my father—they stoned him as if he had been a dog!

OLCUTT. Here, Mr. Bergenfeld, take this chair! (*Helps BERGENFELD into a chair*)

BERNICE. (*At supply table*) Here, what's all this stuff for if it isn't to be used in emergencies? (*Gets cotton and bandages and assists LENA to care for BERGENFELD. LENA bandages his head skillfully, showing effects of her training*)

LENA. That cut on your poor forehead!

BERGENFELD. (*To BERNICE*) I thank you. (*To LENA*) Distress not yourself, my daughter. The undeserved stones which America throws at me to-day wound me less than the memory of the undeserved kindness shown to me before.

LENA. It was cowardly, cruel, to treat you so!

BERNICE. Why did they do it? Why were they so angry, Mr. Bergenfeld?

BERGENFELD. They did not like the news about some strange articles found in the little room above

my jewelry store—large jewels—some call them bombs.

BERNICE. Bombs?

LENA. (*To BERNICE*) But he wasn't trying to escape. He had simply asked that he be allowed to walk to the court-house as a free man. An officer was beside us in plain clothes, when suddenly a crowd began to gather. They seemed to come from everywhere, all at once! Oh, if they should follow us here! (*Puts arm about BERGENFELD'S shoulder protectingly*)

(*Buss enters at c. in time to hear her last words.*)

BUSS. There's no more danger, Lena. The crowd is scattering. The secret service man is below and we've sent for another policeman and a closed carriage.

BERNICE. Oh, Blunderbuss, you're always such a tower of strength!

OLCUTT. I want you to know, Mr Bergenfeld, that I never thought of your being subjected to such humiliation as this! I can't understand how a mob could have gathered. No one knew, outside my father and the government men, what had happened.

BERGENFELD. My arrest is a great pity.

OLCUTT. Of course I can understand your feeling that way.

BERGENFELD. Personal feeling, bah! That is nothing. I am thinking of America, and of the great service I wished to render her. Throughout this country I would have traveled, myself and my daughter Gretchen from Alsace-Lorraine, to tell a story of Prussian cruelty, of my little grandson massacred by the barbarians who lead Germany blindfolded to her destruction! I would awake all Germans who make America their home as I was

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last night awakened, to rise against those madmen! I—(*His strength fails him and he clutches at his heart*)

LENA. Father!

BERGENFELD. (*Recovering*) A little dizziness—it has passed.

BUSS. I exchanged a few words with the secret service man, Mr. Bergenfeld, and he says if you reveal the workings of the German spy system, and give the names of your accomplices, the government might take that into account in sentencing you.

BERGENFELD. I reveal nothing. I accuse no one but myself. I make no appeal for mercy. Last night I renounced my allegiance to the German cause—already I have sent them word of it—and what I learn henceforth is mine to use against them—before that, no! That would make loyalty itself disloyal.

BUSS. Well, your friends would like to lessen your troubles if they could, you know.

LENA. He does not consider himself, and I am proud of him.

BUSS. But his duty to America—if there *was* anybody else in on this——

BERGENFELD. It may be I make a mistake—I do not know. Duty is not always a plain marked path. I have to choose with what wisdom I can.

OLCUTT. (*With emotion*) Who could understand that better than I?

BERNICE. Oh, Mr. Bergenfeld, I can't make it all out, nor why this awful thing has happened to you and Lena, but I can't look into your eyes and hear your voice now without realizing you're just as sincere and patriotic as the rest of us. That's just the way I feel.

BUSS. Same here, Mr. Bergenfeld. (*LENA looks appealingly at OLCUTT, but he turns away*)

LENA. (*To BUSS and BERNICE*) I thank you

both. Just that someone, anyone, believes in him, means so much to me.

OLCUTT. (*Looks from window*) There's a carriage turned in at the driveway—I suppose it's for you, Mr. Bergenfeld.

LENA. (*As BERGENFELD gets to his feet*) They'll take you away from me—they'll put you in a cell—away from the sunlight and the singing birds; yet you are now heart and soul for America! (*Clings to him*) I can't bear for you to be punished—I can't!

BERGENFELD. Hush, my daughter, it is for the best. Whatever happens, it is for the best. Go down now to the door and tell them that I will come. I have a word to say to this young man alone. (*Looks at OLCUTT. As LENA turns away from her father, BERNICE throws her arms about her*)

BERNICE. Buss and I will go down with you. We want the whole world to know that whatever happens, we're your friends forever. (*Buss and BERNICE exits with LENA at C and off L.*)

BERGENFELD. Before I go I would shake hands with you.

OLCUTT. (*Gives him his hand*) Mr. Bergenfeld, I hope you understand that I couldn't consider Lena, in what I did. I couldn't consider anything but doing my duty as I saw it.

BERGENFELD. That is why I would take your hand. Women, the weaker sex, they reason from heart, but we men—we know! A loyal soldier could not do other than you have done. Some day, my daughter will see it. When that day comes, after I am sent far away——

OLCUTT. You think you'll be sent out of the country?

BERGENFELD. Out of the country—far away—where no railroads bring a man back again.

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OLCUTT. You don't mean——?

BERGENFELD. A spy who set out to destroy America's weapons of war? Why should your country be faint-hearted in dealing with these matters? When that time comes, and Lena is left alone—you will take care of her, my son?

OLCUTT. I will. Before God, I will!

(A policeman appears at c.)

BERGENFELD. You have come for me? It is well.
(BERGENFELD walks out at c. and policeman follows him off L.)

*(OLCUTT sits by table, buries his head in his hands.
WALTERS enters stealthily at c. from R.)*

WALTERS. Olcutt! I say! Are you asleep? Rouse up and tell me what's happened to old Bergenfeld?

OLCUTT. If you'll excuse me, I don't feel like talking, Walters. You'll find out everything in good time. It will all be in the papers.

WALTERS. My God! I can't believe he's been arrested.

OLCUTT. If you know already what's happened, why did you start in questioning me?

WALTERS. Because I just got in from camp, and it's a shock to me. Lena and I have been pretty friendly, you know, and—it's being her father and a man living right here in this town—I thought you might know the details, that's all. Wh—what did Bergenfeld do? *(Takes ivory paper-knife from table and begins fooling with it)*

OLCUTT. I don't care to be put on the witness stand, Walters.

WALTERS. You might be decently polite, but you needn't if you don't want to. I'm a good guesser.

Bergenfeld's a German, and he's been cutting some monkey shines that displeases the United States government. Hes got himself in trouble over it; I'll bet my hat he has!

OLCUTT. (*Moodily*) Well, this time your hat is safe.

WALTERS. So that *was* an officer walking beside him as he left his house—I thought so! They're a tricky lot, those Germans. I suppose now he's arrested they'll question him and—and—perhaps induce him to save his own skin by throwing the blame on some one else?

OLCUTT. They'll not succeed in that.

WALTERS. Why not?

OLCUTT. Because he's been put to the test already. (*The paper-knife snaps in WALTERS' hand and this attracts OLCUTT's attention to him*) What's the matter? Got a chill?

WALTERS. I—I'm indignant, that's all. The old scoundrel! I tell you, Olcutt, this government is too easy-going, too lenient with traitors. We should all band together and crush them out of existence. How many years do you think he'll get?

OLCUTT. (*Quietly alert*) How many do you think?

WALTERS. Well, when a man takes to fooling round with bombs——

OLCUTT. (*Interrupts sharply*) Who told you anything about bombs? The secret service men kept their own counsel as to that.

WALTERS. (*With a sickly smile*) Why, you told me yourself—just now.

OLCUTT. That's a lie. Somhow I began to suspect you the minute you started to lambast Bergenfeld.

WALTERS. Suspect me of what?

OLCUTT. Perhaps of having been that extra workman whose presence in Dad's factory last

night became known through a forged card he left behind him; and also through the bomb he left there for good measure. Yes, now I'm convinced of it.

WALTERS. Take that back! Take that back, or by God I'll—(*Puts hand to hip pocket, but OLCUTT covers him first*)

OLCUTT. None of that! Lay your gun on that table. (WALTERS obeys) Hands up! (WALTERS throws up hands and OLCUTT takes gun from table) Thanks. Mine was a flashlight. (WALTERS with a mumbled curse starts toward him again) Stop! (BUSS steps inside door c. and looks from one to the other)

WALTERS. You can't prove anything on me.

OLCUTT. If you had played as square a game with Bergenfeld as he did with you, you wouldn't have given yourself away.

WALTERS. I haven't given myself away. If you attempt to accuse me of being in on any schemes of Bergenfeld and his kind I'll sue you for damages. You can't blackmail me. I'm an innocent man who has always stood well in this community. You can't prove I ever had anything to do with Bergenfeld, or knew anything about him and his German plots.

BUSS. May I butt in here for just a minute?

OLCUTT. Go ahead.

BUSS. (*To WALTERS*) If you didn't know anything about Bergenfeld, as you say, how is that you were able to tell that mob so much about him and egg them on until they jumped on him? I've just found out you were the fellow that did it.

OLCUTT. We'll escort him down to the police station, Buss, and let him answer a few questions there. But first, just for curiosity, you might go through him.

WALTERS. Search me, and welcome.

OLCUTT. Hm! You're a bit too willing, but we'll go on with it.

BUSS. Nothing but this. (*Hands out two or three torn envelopes*)

OLCUTT. (*Looks at them and is about to throw them aside when something attracts his attention*) What's on the back of this one? Penmanship practice, eh? "Ivan Sazlavsky"! I recognize the name! (*WALTERS, startled, gives a frightened gasp and tries to snatch the envelope from OLCUTT's hand*) Trying to disguise your handwriting, eh, before you wrote on the pass-card? Here is the pass-card—a forged one—(*Produces it*) I have it with me, luckily—and Ivan Sazlavsky is the name. I think we have your number, Walters.

(LENA enters at c.)

LENA. (*To OLCUTT*) I've brought you a message from your father—he met us at the court-house. (*Produces a letter*)

WALTERS. (*Cuts in frantically*) For God's sake, say a word for me, Lena! Your father made me his dupe—tempted me with money and big promises. I didn't mean to go so far. I didn't know any lives were at stake—you know that—tell them so—won't you?

BUSS. A little more form, Walters. Shoulders up! Don't sag! Olcutt, let a newly enlisted private have the pleasure of escorting this imitation officer to headquarters, will you? I'm aching for the job.

OLCUTT. Take him along, Buss, and be quick about it.

BUSS. (*Taking pistol OLCUTT hands him*) March! (*Exits, WALTERS going unwillingly ahead of him out at c.*)

OLCUTT. The message, Lena? (*She hands him*

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a letter with a second one enclosed) A note from father and—what is this?

LENA. A letter written by my father to the German Government—my sister found it on his desk after they took him away.

OLCUTT. (*As he reads note*) And she went to Dad herself and took him that letter?

LENA. Yes.

OLCUTT. (*After a pause—still reading*) Why, Lena, this is wonderful! Dad says he considers that letter proof positive of your father's change of heart, and will go to Washington himself to intercede for him. That may mean—*must* mean—a short sentence, perhaps a pardon.

LENA. Sister said she knew it must all come right.

OLCUTT. It will all come right—and after your father is free, may I ask again to be friends?

LENA. Perhaps—after father is free.

OLCUTT. I'm leaving for camp to-morrow. It's no time to think of our own happiness, I know, but I'll soon be somewhere in France and—well, I believe many a soldier would fight better if he knew that back there a sweetheart was waiting who had faith in him.

LENA. That's our part—to wait for our soldier sweethearts and have faith in them.

OLCUTT. The faith of the women we leave behind! Hold on to that faith, Lena. That's what's going to help every boy in khaki to do his bit. Lena!

Curtain.

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